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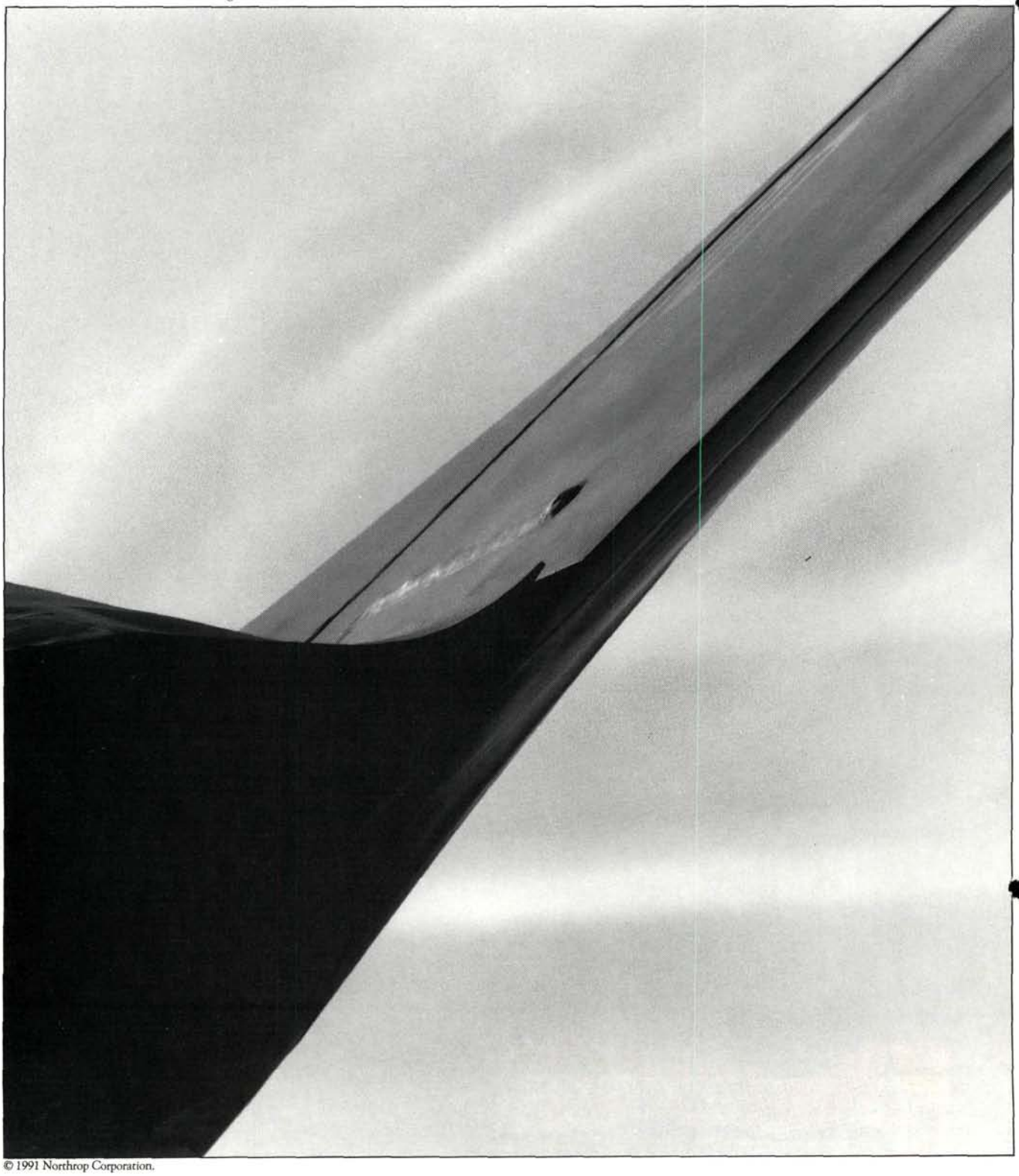

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APRIL 8, 1991

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FROM WASHINGTON

Executive sweets

Last year's economic news wasn't bad for everyone. It's annual report season for America's corporations, and according to *The New York Times* top executives got pay increases averaging 8 to 15 percent. That's pretty modest compared with the rip-roaring 1980s, but 8 percent is not bad in a year when the economy entered a recession. Did you do that well? In one study cited by the *Times*, median compensation for 176 chief executives was $1.7 million in 1990. That well you surely didn't do.

When executive pay increases faster than the economy—which happened not just last year but for the past couple of decades—that means other people's share of America's bounty is decreasing. It's another little piece of the general trend toward greater income inequality in the American economy.

Critics of this sort of talk say that the size of the pie matters more than the size of the slices. And they're right: if greater inequality is part of an economic process generating greater prosperity for all, it's easier to accept without qualms. The question is whether the connection exists. Executive pay raises the question in miniature. Does a 15 percent raise for the chairman of General Megalopolitan lead to a smaller, but still nourishing, pay increase for the line workers and secretaries?

During the 1980s boom years, this thesis was at least plausible. The economy was growing, corporate profits were soaring, unemployment was shrinking. Huge increases in top executive pay were held to be the reward for success. Often given in the form of stock options, whose value depends on the company's performance, pay raises were also held to be the reward for risk-taking. Corporate CEOs were being re-engineered from plutocrats into entrepreneurs, and American capitalism was being re-energized as a result.

But entrepreneurs don't simply get more modest increases when times are bad. They actually bring home less. If the "risk" executives were taking was merely that in bad years their raises would only amount to two or three times the rate of inflation, that hardly justified the raises of twenty to thirty times the rate of inflation they got during the good years. Some corporations have even retroactively revalued their executives' stock options (the right to buy shares at a pre-set price) to reflect the sad fact that the stock price didn't go up as hoped. This, of course, defeats the whole point of rewarding executives for performance. Now that the increase in top executive pay—both absolute and relative to other workers in the economy—has continued through two cycles of boom and bust, it is hard to explain as a healthy midcourse correction in the long successful voyage of American capitalism.

TNR editors Mickey Kaus and Robert B. Reich have both argued that changes in the world economy are making people who work with their minds more valuable and people who work with their hands and bodies less valuable. Reich calls the lucky winners of this process "symbolic analysts." Whereas blue-collar workers must increasingly compete with labor from the impoverished Third World, this same global economic integration sets off worldwide competition for the unique talents of those who peddle ideas and decisions. Whether you think this is a good thing or a bad thing (I argued in this space last week, concerning a free-trade pact with Mexico, that with some qualifications it's a good thing), it may be inevitable.

Could this process explain the explosion in executive pay? Louis Uchitelle of the *Times* reports that chief executives of large companies typically make seventy or eighty times what an average worker does—and the gap has more than doubled in the past fifteen years. But Uchitelle also reports that American chief executives "earn almost twice as much as . . . in Canada and Germany, which rank second and third." Japan is famous for its modest executive pay, both compared with America and relative to a company's workers. Clearly international competition cannot explain why American top executives are paid more and more each year. It ought to have the opposite effect.

In truth, competition and other free market virtues have almost nothing to do with determining what top corporate executives get paid. Top executive compensation is generally set by the compensation committee of the board of directors. The members are almost always outside directors—that is, board members who are not also executives of the company itself. But they are most often executives of some other company. And they are chosen for the board—itself a cushy deal—by the executives whose pay they are deciding. Both these factors give them every incentive not to be chintzy.

There are consulting firms that advise corporations on executive pay levels. Their conclusions are generally based on "comparability" studies of what other firms are paying. This turns executive pay raises into a self-feeding process, and also into a genteel form of conspiracy in restraint of trade, as the consultants assure that no one breaks the executive-pay cartel.

Anyway, corporations aren't looking for bargains. Often quite the opposite. Top executive salaries are widely publicized and compared. What corporation wants to admit that it got its CEO off the discount rack? In the American corporate culture, how much the top birds get fed can be a point of pride. This is rarely true regarding the lower-downs.

One claim often made by enthusiasts of the mergers and acquisitions frenzy of the 1980s was that, by reacquainting America's fat corporations with the rigors of the marketplace, the threat or reality of being acquired would whip companies into shape and cut out the flab. To some extent this happened, and many employees' careers were destroyed as a result. But the merger boom was no discernible restraint on excessive executive salaries. In fact, it may have had the opposite effect. By putting corporate executives in close proximity with financiers making hundreds of millions of dollars manipulating corporate assets—and by creating similar opportunities for executives themselves through leveraged buyouts—the M&A era just increased executives' hunger for higher pay, while doing little to prevent them from sating it.

So what should be done? Well, corporations are almost farcically sensitive to bad publicity. Constant harping on bloated executive pay, by the media and by opportunistic politicians, could itself bring some healthy restraint. So would noisier opposition from large institutional shareholders, such as pension funds. The government itself should probably stay out of this, at least directly. The overpaid CEO is just one example among many of fate's arbitrariness in financial matters. There's a remedy that addresses that arbitrariness in general rather than in each of its particulars. It's called progressive taxation.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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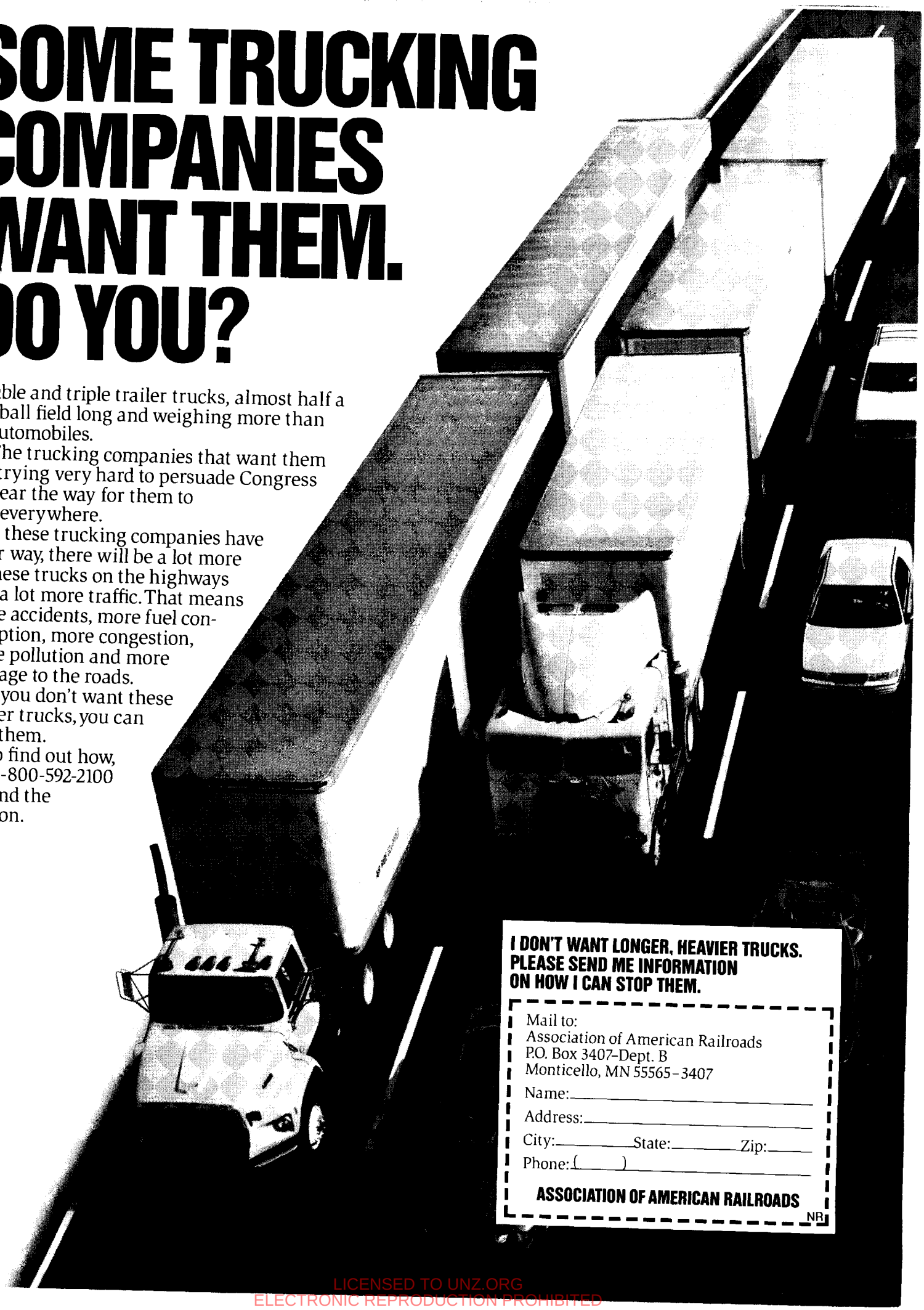

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CORRESPONDENCE

Soldiers' stories

To the editors:

As a historian who teaches about war, as a citizen prepared to support the recent Gulf war (before it was under way), and as an occasional contributor to your pages, I found your March 25 editorial "The Dead" curiously unconvincing. It finds moral solace in an ill-posed question.

I agree that from what we know to date the moral issue does not center on the civilian casualties or the bombing of Baghdad, which technology allowed to focus on "legitimate" targets. (Compare the unfortunate bunker casualties with the tens of thousands slain in single raids on Hamburg, Dresden, or Tokyo.) As you suggest, the troubling ethical issue concerns the Iraqi soldiers slain. The editorial argues that the defeat of Saddam Hussein justifies the death of many enemy soldiers. The relevant question seems to me, however, not whether many enemy deaths were justified, but whether many were avoidable.

Soldiers seeking to surrender enjoy the right not to be killed. We apparently decided that soldiers seeking to flee by foot would be granted this immunity, while soldiers seeking to flee in their vehicles would not. This distinction points to the problematic question: How many of the Iraqi casualties were slain in the last day or two before the cease-fire trying to flee the battlefield because they did not or could not get out of their vehicles and walk? Having immobilized the column of trucks and armor retreating from Kuwait, might we have given drivers and riders a chance to evacuate before progressively destroying it? I do not know the answers. But if we remain serious about the moral issue, this seems to me a question that we should address.

CHARLES MAIER
Cambridge, Massachusetts

The writer is professor of history at Harvard University.

Youth hostile

To the editors:

Although George Eliot fully deserves the honor of having streets named after her in the major Israeli cities, Irving Howe ("An Exercise in Memory," March 11) is not quite right to say that she never succumbed to anti-Semitism. As Mary Ann Evans, she was still unregenerate in 1848 (at age 29) when, in a letter to J. Sibree, she ruminated about how "extermination . . . seems to be the law for inferior races," including "even the Hebrew caucasian." Although she uses "extermination" in the evolutionary rather than the political sense, her subsequent remarks on the Jews' claim to a culture of their own are not exactly music to one's inward ear. "My Gentile nature . . . is almost ready to echo Voltaire's vituperation. I bow to the supremacy of Hebrew poetry, but much of their early mythology, and almost all their history, is utterly revolting. . . . Jesus is venerated and adored by us only for that wherein He transcended or resisted Judaism. . . . Everything specifically Jewish is of a low grade." Unlike T. S. Eliot, who is the subject of Howe's fine essay, however, George Eliot repented her ways.

EDWARD ALEXANDER
Seattle, Washington

The writer is professor of English at the University of Washington.

Rock in the free world

To the editors:

As a fan of the rock group New Order, I want to clear up a few errors in Andrew Sullivan's Diarist ("Poached," March 11). First, the song is called "State of the Nation," not "Shame of the Nation." And if Mr. Sullivan would look at some of the group's albums besides *Substance,* he would find some other relevant titles, such as "Low Life" and "Power, Corruption, and Lies." Finally, the group didn't change its name after Ian Curtis committed suicide. The change was part of a set of agreements the group made even before the name was changed from Warsaw to Joy Division: if any member of the band left for any reason they would split up and re-form under a new name and not perform any of the old songs in concert—all of which the band has kept.

DAN CASE
Springfield, New Jersey
(via 900 number)

Honorable mention

To the editors:

Joshua Muravchik ("Dellums' Dilemma," March 11) wonders whether Representative Ron Dellums "is a man of honor who will guard all secrets vouchsafed to him. . . ." During the twenty years Ron Dellums and I have served together on the House Armed Services Committee, we have both disagreed and agreed about major security policy questions. Yet even in the heat of our most intense debates, senior members of our committee of both parties, including those who have deep philosophical differences with him, have explicitly celebrated Mr. Dellums' integrity. We know from direct experience that he is trustworthy and that he keeps his word.

And we know from his record as chairman of the key Subcommittee on Research and Development that he has scrupulously protected highly classified information about our future military technologies, about our most sensitive special access military programs, and about our future intelligence reconnaissance systems that his subcommittee oversees and funds.

During the cold war our national policies were tested, refined, and tempered in the fire of public debate while the Soviets' ability to solve their problems withered and died because they distrusted those who disagreed with their Party's policies. We will need all of our American strengths to rethink our security policies so we can deal with the new dangers and vulnerabilities of the post-cold war world. Those of us who have worked most closely with Ron Dellums have learned to trust him "as a man of honor" who has both protected our military secrets and challenged our thinking.

LES ASPIN
Washington, D.C.

The writer is chairman of the House Committee on Armed Services.

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Oil skinned

To the editors:

John Judis's article "Burden Shirking" (March 4) only lightly touches on the reasons the Japanese stake in the Persian Gulf might not be as great as first glances would indicate.

The observation by Masamichi Hanabusa, the Japanese consul general, that oil is a "fungible commodity" is an understatement. Oil is easy to transport, does not degrade, and is used everywhere. Japan's 70 percent Middle East oil dependency figure, cited to show that the Japanese have more at stake in the war, is pointless. If Mideast supplies were cut off, Japan would simply increase its purchases from Mexico, Indonesia, Venezuela, Western Africa, etc. That oil shipped to Japan would be pulled from its normal destinations, such as the United States. There is no

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

APRIL 8, 1991

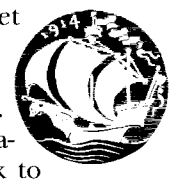
FORCED UNION

What a fraud. For the first time in history the Soviet people were permitted to vote in a nationwide referendum, but Mikhail Gorbachev saw to it that the exercise was essentially a sham. No one could say what the question really meant; but whatever it meant, the regime used hysterical propaganda, censorship, intimidation, and lies, and even ballot-box-stuffing in some areas, to ensure that it carried. Mr. Gorbachev won his majority, but neither he nor the Soviet Union is stronger as a result. Indeed, the behemoth seems more than ever headed for chaos, and outsiders like the Bush administration had best prepare for the worst—a militaristic regime hostile to the West—even as they hope and work for something better.

There is strong reason to think that Mr. Gorbachev staged this democratic charade to secure what he could describe as a democratic mandate to suppress democracy. Mr. Gorbachev already has shown himself capable of using lethal force to forestall a democratic outcome in the Baltics, where huge majorities favor independence. And the wording of his March 17 referendum—especially in light of the apocalyptic terms in which the choice was described in government-controlled propaganda—makes it clear that Mr. Gorbachev reserves the use of almost any means to maintain his own power and that of the central government. Systematic censorship of and menacing allegations against his opponents make it reasonable to fear purges and arrests.

The referendum's wording was widely described as "vague." It asked, "Do you consider it necessary to preserve the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics, in which the rights and freedoms of people of any nationality will be fully guaranteed?" If Mikhail Gorbachev chooses, the words can be interpreted to confer vast power on the central government. To call a course of action "necessary" can be read as making it an imperative without permissible alternatives. To call what is to be preserved "the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" can imply also the preservation of the Leninist system that still more or less governs the country. A "renewed federation," if it is the one Mr. Gorbachev has proposed in his all-Union treaty, makes it almost impossible for the republics to secede. And guaranteeing the "rights . . . of people of any nationality" could well mean intervening with force to "protect" minorities, as Moscow sent Black Berets into the Baltics in January to support phony National Salvation Committees and used tanks in January 1990 to seize Azerbaijani nationalists in the name of protecting Russians and Armenians.

Two days before the vote Mr. Gorbachev declared that the issue facing voters in the referendum was nothing less than "the fate of our people and the fate of our whole civilization." *Pravda* pictured the choice as "Either Union or Chaos," and showed handfuls of grain as the fruits of a Gorbachev victory and a handful of bullets as the alternative. "Vremya," the government-controlled TV news show, repeatedly declared that civil war would result if Mr. Gorbachev's initiative were defeated. Mr. Gorbachev's opponents were accused of trying to dismember the country and foment revolution. Other commentators predicted a threat to world peace brought on by the breakup of the Soviet Union.



Political and economic conditions are serious enough in the Soviet Union today that Mr. Gorbachev may actually believe his own propaganda. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets to support his rival, Boris Yeltsin, and to demand Mr. Gorbachev's resignation. The government's own planning agency predicted a decline in Soviet GNP of 12 percent this year. If Mr. Gorbachev sees these developments as constituting threats to the Union, to order, to stability, to central rule, to socialism, to Soviet great power status, and (not least) to his own position, what will he do to oppose them?

For more than a year he has demonstrated that what he will not do is yield to reality by opting for more democracy, looser ties for the nationalities, and a freer economy. In his first years in power Mr. Gorbachev un-

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leashed mighty forces for liberation. Now he plainly feels threatened by those same forces. He rejected private property and free markets, the only economic mechanisms that might make his country productive, in favor of continued bureaucratic stagnation. He declined to stand for election. Lately he has turned on glasnost, his once-precious child, by installing a chairman of state television who has silenced or fired one independent-minded journalist after another.

Some in the West (including former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher) still believe that all this retrograde movement constitutes no more than a tactical retreat, and that Mr. Gorbachev will return to his reformist strategy when he gets things under control. This view is not shared by the liberal economists and democrats who used to support Mr. Gorbachev, notably his former foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze. To replace them, Mr. Gorbachev has installed a phalanx of anti-democratic reactionaries and old-line Communist bureaucrats in the highest executive positions in the government: the vice presidency, prime ministership, interior ministry, defense ministry, and KGB chairmanship.

Neither these moves nor the March 17 referendum has eliminated the threats to Mr. Gorbachev's rule. On the contrary, all those threats—Mr. Yeltsin, separatism, the prospect of economic collapse—are stronger than ever. Mr. Yeltsin won a considerably larger majority in favor of an elected Russian presidency (which the unelected Mr. Gorbachev called an idea "fraught with danger") than Mr. Gorbachev did for his "renewed Union." And the "no" vote on the union question was strongest in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, and the other big cities—precisely the areas of greatest political activity and sophistication.

Separatist sentiment also is stronger as a result of the referendum. Even though Mr. Gorbachev sought and won a majority of all votes cast, six republics, representing 10 percent of the Union's population, refused to participate, on the grounds that to do so would be to join themselves to a body politic of which they do not feel themselves a part. (The central government responded by setting up polling places at army bases, where ballot boxes reportedly were stuffed with pro-Gorbachev ballots.) In the Ukraine a majority supported a separate item on the ballot calling for more autonomy than Mr. Gorbachev envisages, and in the western Ukraine, a majority backed secession.

Other conditions too are increasing the pressures on Mr. Gorbachev. Coal miners are on strike. Oil production is falling. And the government this year must come up with $15 billion to pay foreign creditors. Despite the need to placate overseas benefactors, Mr. Gorbachev's prime minister, Valentin Pavlov, recently accused Western bankers of plotting to flood the Soviet economy with rubles, wreck the economy, and overthrow Mr. Gorbachev.

Everything points to a crescendo in the Soviet Union this year—a convulsive change. One possibility is that Mr. Gorbachev will stage a kind of coup himself (as some say he has been doing in rolling fashion for the past year), cracking down gradually but steadily on separatists and democrats. A second is that his current allies—the KGB, the military, the Communist Party, and ultra-right-wing nationalists—will push him aside and seize full control in the name of stability. A third is that the people could pour into the streets demanding an end to Communist rule. Any such popular revolution, however, is likely to be met with violence.

The Bush administration, belatedly, has begun to cover its bets in the Soviet Union—hoping for the best from Mr. Gorbachev while increasing its contacts in the republics and the military. Secretary of State James Baker's high-visibility visit with Baltic leaders on the eve of the March 17 referendum was part of that process. Reportedly, Mr. Baker urged a rapprochement between Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Yeltsin to shift the Soviet Union off its road to ruin.

At the same time, the administration ought to be planning for the possibility that the Soviet military, secret police, hard-line Communists, and ultranationalists could take over and once more assume a foreign policy based on hostility to "Western imperialism." This would not be Cold War II, because the Soviet Union has lost much of its empire and all of its ideological drive. But it could create a dangerous period of instability and hostility if, for example, the Soviets refused to finish withdrawing their forces from Eastern Europe.

This worst case is not necessarily the most likely outcome, but it needs to be prepared for by keeping NATO strong. The likeliest case, tragically, is economic collapse and mounting violence. Amid the chaos, though, the various republics might manage to escape the Union and establish governments based on local cultural inclinations. Some would be democracies and some might even choose to confederate. Mikhail Gorbachev, if he were a true visionary, would move to such a future without bringing on chaos first. Sadly, this is not the direction he is taking.

REST IN PIECES

A civil war is now raging in Iraq—to be more precise, two civil wars. One of them derives from the great sectarian fault-line among the Arabs, the theological divide going back thirteen centuries between Sunni Islam and the schismatic Shiite heresy. By now this is a social and political chasm as well. The Shiites constitute some 60 percent of Iraq's population. Though they have had neither the force nor the fortitude to seize power for themselves, their very separateness from the other Arabs, in both doctrine and demeanor, keeps Iraq—and other Arab countries, too—from ever being a proper nation-state. The

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sparse trappings of Iraqi peoplehood, like the trappings of authority and sovereignty, have been imposed largely by terror.

The second Iraqi civil war, more brutal and systematic, is against the Kurds, 20 percent of the population. The Kurds are Sunni but not Arab, and their loyalties cut across the frontiers of western Asia to the abstraction called Kurdistan, a nonetheless primordial reality in the minds of many millions of Kurdish internal exiles in Turkey, Iran, and the Soviet Union. While the world focuses on the Palestinians, whose appearance in history owes all to a jarring encounter with the Jews, the Kurds are a real nation whose affront is to have a past of their own.

Saddam Hussein was correct in his complaint that the borders of the Middle East were drawn by the imperial powers. What he didn't say was that Iraq was the prime beneficiary of their caprice. Included within Iraq's frontiers were vast oil fields that might have rested with the Turks had the British not used the end of World War I to consummate the centuries-old struggle of the Court of St. James's against the Divine Porte. More to the point, the imperials forced the Kurds and the Shiites to submit to the rule of the Arab Sunni elites, bombing those who resisted—all in the name of national self-determination.

Of the many illegitimate states in the region—states that don't comport with nation, states without democratic sanction or constitutional constraint—Iraq is the least legitimate. Its way has been from the very beginning the way of massacre. As we have argued on many occasions in recent months, the Iraqi populace was mostly not with the regime that governed it. To the Kurds and the Shiites certainly, and to the pathetic remnants of long-ago grand minorities since ravaged by Baghdad, the Gulf war was a war of liberation—liberation not only from the Baath and its quintessential expression, Saddam himself, but also from the cruel dominion of the minority Sunnis.

No one really wanted to see the war that way, least of all the Sunnis among our allies. But they were at least willing to have the war undo the Baath even if they wouldn't want it also to undo their fellow Sunnis. The West, by contrast, prattled on about the territorial integrity of Iraq, as if it were some real country like Sweden or Poland or Japan. Now the facts on the ground have shown how preposterous was our solicitude for an entity that is fissiparous at its essence, something that should not hold even if it could.

The brutality of the regime is well known from the past. It is now matching its history with death-happenings of colossal magnitude inflicted on innocents. The Republican Guards recognize no difference between civilians and militiamen. In any case, among both Kurdish and Shiite guerrillas are defectors from Saddam's army, against whom there would be only the wildest revenge. By keeping the Iraqis from redeploying their fighter craft and using their helicopters, the United States seems finally to have moved away from a studied neutrality in Iraq's internal wars. The gesture is on the side of life: imagine what the besieged regime in Baghdad would otherwise rain on the men and women of Karbala and Mosul. The ground fighting, according to all accounts (not just the suspect ones from Iran), has been vicious. The infidel West put the Shiite holy places off-limits to its troops and weapons. Now the commander of the Iraqi jihad has made them targets of his wrath.

The dismemberment of Iraq by its long-suppressed populace, and with our acquiescence, would be a gain for all the peoples of the region. The fears about Iranians dominating whatever may emerge from Iraq are ill-founded. Iran would find it very hard to tame even a Shiite government in the south. For, aside from the Sunni-Shiite fault-line splitting Iraqis, there is the deep fault-line that divides Arabs from Persians, even Shiite Arabs from Shiite Persians.

Neither the Shiites nor the Kurds are about to install governments according to John Locke. Moreover, the greater the success of the Kurds in Iraq's west and north, the more anxious the Turks will become. The Turks have not historically been kind to the Kurds, but the Turks have given us no reason for us to wish them ill. On the contrary, Turkey has been a stalwart ally, not only in the Gulf but over many years in NATO as well; and in an inhospitable environment the Turks have been making their way to the decencies and disciplines of democratic life. Reconciling Turk and Kurd would be an appropriate purpose for U.S. diplomacy.

The U.S.-led coalition did not fight the Gulf war for the Shiites or the Kurds. But these are people who suffered bitterly under a regime that the British put into place and that the United States was pleased to join the Soviets in safeguarding for so long. They are entitled to a chance at governing their own affairs.

NOTEBOOK

CALL IT IN: If you were a Muscovite, how would you have voted in Mikhail Gorbachev's March 17 referendum? Details of the referendum, including its exact wording, may be found in this week's lead editorial, beginning on page 7. To register your view, call our Sound Off line, 1-900-726-6671. Results in this space two weeks hence. . . . Next year's Democratic nominee should indeed be someone who supported the use of force in the Persian Gulf, according to 73 percent of the respondents to our Sound Off poll a fortnight ago. Twenty-seven percent disagreed.

BALKANIC ERUPTION: Democracy is coming to Albania. Last week the most isolated and backward na-

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tion in Europe renewed diplomatic ties with the United States after fifty-two years. Multiparty elections are scheduled for March 31. Challenging the Communist Party of Ramiz Alia is a newborn Democratic Party with a program of human rights, economic liberalism, and European integration. This comes as very good news indeed. Unlike other countries in Eastern Europe, Albania has no history of opposition. As late as August 1990, a congressional delegation reported "no known organized dissident activity in Albania." Then in December student strikes at the University of Tirana over lack of heat and electricity in dorms turned into a mass political movement. Dr. Sali Berisha, a cardiologist, and Gramoz Pashko, an economist, emerged as its leaders. They seized the moment to found the Democratic Party and began publishing a newspaper. The pair was in Washington last week to attend a ceremony marking the re-establishment of diplomatic relations at the State Department, and talked about their collaboration at a lunch given by the National Democratic Institute. Dr. Berisha, an extravagant, Byronic character with fierce eyes and wild black hair, who with luck will be Albania's first democratic prime minister, says he joined the opposition when he realized that "liberty and democracy were more important for the hearts of people than medicine." Mr. Pashko, who is younger and more subdued, is also delightfully frank. "We have been ruled by idiots," he told *The Wall Street Journal* last week. He says the government never jailed him for his critical work on the Albanian socialist economy "probably because they needed my brain." With its history of Stalinist puritanism, high ovine population density, and leaders with names like Hoxha and Zog, Albania has always seemed like something of a joke to the free world. It's time to take it seriously.

THE GREEN MOVEMENT: Mark Green seems to be taking his responsibilities as New York consumer commissioner seriously, at least with regard to truth-in-labeling. This spring he's "facilitating" a course offered by the Learning Alliance on "How to Meet & Keep Your Politically Correct Mate." The first session, to be held in Tribeca at "NYC's politically correct club," the Wetlands, will be an evening of "semi-structured mingling and informal discussions." This is to be followed by a weekend gathering on the Upper West Side, described as "an opportunity to spend time with some like-minded people." If you still haven't met your socially conscious sweetheart, there's a last chance at a "politically correct pot luck picnic" in Central Park. You bring the Indigo Girls tapes, I'll bring the Rainforest Crunch. Mark will arrive by chauffeured bicycle to lead a training session for the humor-impaired.

LOOK WHO'S NOT LEAKING: We recently received a letter from Simon and Schuster about a new book. "Dear Book Editor," it began. "You've heard very little about the new Bob Woodward book for good reason. It was not in our spring catalog. We're not permitted to send out any descriptive copy. It's under extremely tight security until the on-sale date. No one outside the house will be allowed to see it ahead of time, which is why no first serial rights or book club rights are being sold." After years of complaining about government secrecy, Mr. Woodward has learned a valuable lesson: if you can't lick 'em, join 'em. ●

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

BIOTECH BINGO

By Robert Bazell

Last year Bill Smith's lymphoma, a cancer of the white blood cells, threatened to end his life within months. Horrendous open sores covered his skin. For years the disease had resisted several courses of standard chemotherapy and radiation treatments. So Smith volunteered for treatment at Boston University Hospital with an experimental drug made by Seragen, a small biotechnology firm in Hopkinton, Massachusetts. Doctors now find no trace of the cancer in Smith's body. His skin has cleared, and he says he feels great.

Smith's recovery could signal the beginning of a new treatment for some types of cancer. It also could be part of a process that enormously enriches Boston University and canonizes its controversial president, John Silber. Under Silber's direction BU's board of trustees has invested about $60 million in Seragen and continues to pay more than $1 million a month to keep the company afloat.

In the world of investment, biotechnology has become synonymous with risk. Some critics suggested that BU would have been better off pouring its investment dollars onto the craps tables of Las Vegas. William Weld, who defeated Silber last year in the Massachusetts gubernatorial election, had pointed to the Seragen investment as an example of Silber's alleged lack of managerial ability. But if the drug succeeds, Boston University's wealth could grow much closer to that of its giant rivals across the Charles River. Whatever the outcome, the Seragen story will remain an extraordinary episode in the often convoluted relationship between investors, academia, and biotechnology.

It has now been more than fifteen years since Robert Swanson, a young man who understood both finance and science, invited Herbert Boyer, a shy molecular biologist at the University of California, San Francisco, out for a beer. Swanson described his vision to Boyer:

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that the techniques and ideas that Boyer had devised for manipulating DNA could be translated into products at a private company yet to be established. As a result of that meeting, Genentech, the first well-known biotechnology corporation, was founded; Swanson and Boyer made their fortunes; and profound changes ensued in academic biomedical research.

Soon venture capitalists swarmed over universities in much the same manner as speculators traveled the plains of Texas and Oklahoma in search of oil rights early in this century. But whereas oil speculators seek to purchase something tangible, the mineral rights for a piece of land, venture capitalists are looking to buy an idea. Anyone involved in the biotechnology industry acknowledges that to succeed investors must recognize not a product, but, as Swanson saw, the potential for a product in a researcher's work.

Controversy erupted soon after the Genentech agreement became public knowledge. Hadn't Boyer's research—indeed, all of his training and career—been financed by the National Institutes of Health? Didn't he work for a salary paid by the people of California? What right did he have to sell his ideas for stock options, which ultimately became worth many millions of dollars? To this day there are few satisfactory answers to these questions. Nonetheless, the objections to what was once viewed as academic prostitution have evaporated. Almost all prominent and many not so prominent biomedical researchers have some sort of relationship with at least one of the thousand or so biotechnology companies organized since the mid-'70s. Thirty-one states maintain offices of "technology transfer" to facilitate the formation of new Genentechs.

The idea dominating science administration these days is that biotechnology companies represent the best means of moving research from the test tube to the patient's bedside. In a typical arrangement a venture capitalist signs up a scientist or group of scientists, brings in money from sources such as insurance companies and pension funds, and hires management, most often veterans of the pharmaceutical industry. Everyone gets stock or stock options, and the venture capitalist usually retains controlling interest. Even though the payoff can be gigantic, most often there is little or no profit. Of those 1,000 biotech companies, few have actually declared bankruptcy, but only about 200 have publicly offered stock. Most remain in unprofitable hibernation. To date the entire biotechnology industry has gained Food and Drug Administration approval for only a dozen therapeutic agents, such as Genentech's heart attack treatment TPA and Eli Lilly's human insulin manufactured with bacteria.

Universities have attempted to profit from the new infusion of capital while trying as much as possible to limit the obvious possibilities for conflicts of interest by their faculty members. The big research centers, such as Stanford, MIT, Harvard, and the University of California, generally work to secure patents for the inventions of their faculty members, which the university owns. The university profits from those patents that prove commercially successful, often sharing some of the money with the scientists. For the most part the big universities are content to let others, sometimes in cooperation with their faculty members, take the risks and enjoy the benefits of trying to bring products to market.

Thus there was nothing unusual in the experiences of Jack Murphy. As a young faculty member at Harvard Medical School in 1979, he helped establish the company that later became Seragen. Also during that time he developed the idea for a new type of drug created through genetic engineering. His idea involved fusing a portion of the toxin released by the bacterium that causes diphtheria with a portion of a second molecule. The hope was that the newly made molecule would specifically attack and destroy certain cells, such as cancer cells, without harming other parts of the body. Harvard soon locked up the idea in an airtight patent. Seragen bought the rights from Harvard to develop and market the product. For a series of reasons, the development moved slowly. Some of Seragen's key investors grew impatient. To make matters worse, Harvard denied Murphy tenure in 1984. Several colleagues thought he was better at infecting others with his optimism than trying to cure disease.

Murphy found a new job at Boston University, which liked his ideas so much it bought the company, acquiring a 70 percent stake from a Norwegian pharmaceutical house. Murphy eventually gained the title of chief of molecular medicine at Boston University Hospital, where he operates a large laboratory. Whereas most university research departments try to distance themselves from biotechnology companies, BU and Seragen are in effect one and the same in terms of both research goals and shared finances.

Why did the board, under Silber's direction, take the gamble? During the campaign Weld accused Silber of holding a personal financial stake in Seragen or a related company. Silber denied it, and Weld never offered proof. Some university board members do own a piece of Seragen through a limited partnership that holds several stocks. According to BU spokesman Thomas Cashman, the board members invested the university's money in Seragen "because all along they've seen it as a very sound investment."

But it is far from certain the drug will succeed. Smith, a 62-year-old retired businessman who lives in Hingham, Massachusetts, is one of sixty patients enrolled in the Phase I studies, designed to determine whether the drug has harmful side effects. So far no serious side effects have appeared. Among the other volunteers, all with late-stage cancer, a few showed improvements as dramatic as Smith's. In others the cancer shrank but did not disappear, and in most cases the drug had no effect. That describes a typically successful Phase I drug trial. Now the researchers will move on to larger trials to determine just how effective the drug is, and already they are talking about testing it against oth-

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er forms of cancer, and against rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, and AIDS. Anyone familiar with drug testing knows that the road to FDA approval is littered with the crushed capsules of many experimental therapies that looked equally promising in their early trials. But for now, Smith, Murphy, and Silber have cause for joy.

ROBERT BAZELL is the science correspondent for NBC News.

The Pope's war record.

VATICANT

By Furio Colombo

"We Christians of the Arab nations . . . rejoiced while listening to the pope. We found in his words confirmation that there is no identification between Christianity and the Western World." The day was February 28, a few hours after the war in the Gulf ended. The statement was that of Monsignor Henry Teissier, president of the North African Conference of Catholic Bishops, after he received an invitation to the Vatican Peace Conference on the Middle East, scheduled to begin on March 4. The conference, which included all bishops from Middle Eastern countries and a few Western bishops hand-picked by the pope, was meant to be a declaration of support for what John Paul II did and said during the Gulf war.

It was designed, in other words, to ratify the pontiff's stance of drastic opposition and unconditional condemnation. Expressions such as "the War Lords," to designate those in the U.S.-led coalition that declared their support for the military operations in the Gulf, appeared regularly in the Vatican daily newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano.* As early as November 17, 1990, *Civiltá Cattolica,* the official publication of the Jesuit order, had written: "The war in the Gulf will be a moral shame and a political disaster." And on January 10 Cardinal Silvio Oddi, a specialist on the Middle East and a supporter of the pope, pronounced: "I know there are bishops and clergy favoring this war. I wonder whether these gentlemen ever bothered to learn anything about the region. Have they ever listened to the Catholic Patriarch of Baghdad?" Sounds like a fair point, except that the Patriarch of Baghdad is Raphael I. Badawid, a fierce enemy of Israel. On March 5 in Rome, during the Vatican conference, which was presided over by the pope, Badawid made the extraordinary statement that "Saddam Hussein has acted according to his conscience. . . . The war in the Gulf was waged by America and its allies to defend the interests of Israel and oil."

John Paul II spoke out thirty-eight times against the war, offering his prayers for Iraq and the "suffering people of the area." Here are some of his statements about the events in the Gulf. On January 10: "This war is an adventure with no return." On January 16: "International law cannot be seen as a protection for hegemonic interests." On January 21: "The intoxication of war has prevailed over the courage of peace." On January 26: "This war is a threat to humanity." On February 4: "This war is a virus of death."

There was not an echo of a hint of a suggestion that the United States and its allies (including Italy) were in battle against a tyrant who had just invaded and occupied and brutally destroyed a small neighbor, and whose "conscience" has managed to live with the use of chemical weapons against his own people.

John Paul II's attitude provoked dramatic responses in Italy. It split Italian Catholic opinion and almost destabilized the Italian government, which stood firm as a member of the coalition but was certainly unprepared to face dissent from the pope. It is possible that "there was some embarrassment among the Western bishops participating at the Vatican's conference on the Middle East," as one expert on Vatican affairs wrote in the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica.* But the pontiff was hardly without support. On March 2 the weekly magazine *Il Sabato,* known to be very close to the Vatican, dedicated its cover story to Bush and Gorbachev. The headline was: "Gorbachev, Nobel Prize for Peace. Bush, Nobel Prize for War."

Israel, of course, became a dramatic issue in the intense Catholic debate that erupted in Italy about the war. Only after nineteen Scuds hit the Jewish state (eventually twice that number were launched against it) did the pope finally mention Israel: "We want to express our solidarity to the suffering people in the state of Israel," he said, the first time the expression "state of Israel" was used by a pope since 1947. The following day, February 19, The Jewish Community in Rome organized a petition demanding the Vatican's immediate recognition of the state of Israel, which was supported by two-thirds of the Italian Parliament (including the Communists—or as they now call themselves, the Democratic Party of the Left). But the pope reiterated his refusal.

At the conference on the Middle East in Rome, moreover, John Paul II went further and chose to define Israel's current antagonists in a remarkable manner: he referred to them, on March 6, as "the Wandering Palestinians." The pope, remember, is a man exquisitely sensitive to language.

That day, at the conclusion of the conference, the official Vatican position was stated definitively by Deputy Secretary of State Monsignor Angelo Sodano: "We don't even know the price of this war in terms of destruction and human lives [the unconfirmed figure of 150,000 *civilian* casualties was circulated by Bishop Ersilio Tonini, a close friend of the pope]. But we demand

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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that the same speed and energy be applied to solve the Palestinian problem." It was a startling, though not exactly a surprising, admission. In his thinking about the Middle East, the pope has long had his own "new world order" in mind. The relationship between the Catholic Church and Islam clearly takes precedence, for the Vatican, over the relationship between the Catholic Church and Judaism. And even over the one between the Catholic Church and the Western world.

FURIO COLOMBO is the author of *God in America* (Columbia University Press, 1986) and a columnist for the Italian daily *La Stampa.*

The absurd in Serbia.

BLOODY BALKANS

By Robert D. Kaplan

No story demonstrates the limits of conventional journalism like Yugoslavia. Here is the ultimate East-West struggle, where capitalism and communism are code words for deeper historical forces: Christendom against Islam; Western Catholicism, as represented by the Croats and Slovenes, battling Eastern Orthodoxy, as represented by the Serbs and Macedonians; the modernist traditions of Habsburg Austria-Hungary colliding with the despotism of Ottoman Turkey. At another level is the still raw issue of Nazi war crimes: How many Catholic priests in Croatia collaborated in the extermination of Orthodox Serbs? Though rarely stated, this question reverberates in every nuance of the Serb-Croat dispute. Yet news from Yugoslavia, far from being fascinating and full of delicious texture, is an opaque muddle, as repetitive and dreary as accounts from Northern Ireland.

Yugoslavia is not visually exotic, and its story has not been one of personalities and events that are easily compressed into sound bites. Rather, the drama in Yugoslavia is the process itself: the way in which hatreds build, the way in which differing historical currents—in this case, eight fiercely nationalist republics and provinces, comprising more than a dozen ethnic groups and speaking three languages with two different alphabets—interact. Recently, however, something happened in Yugoslavia that the media could get a handle on: tanks and troops battled thousands of anti-Communist demonstrators in the main square of Belgrade. Eastern Europe's revolution had finally come to Yugoslavia!

Actually, it had finally come to Serbia. The northern, Catholic republics of Slovenia and Croatia had their anti-Communist upheavals last year. In a series of elections, their people voted for nationalist, free market-oriented leadership. Since these revolutions occurred primarily in the voting booth, rather than in the streets, television barely noticed. Slovenia and Croatia now have Western-looking governments that pay short shrift to a federal, Serbian-influenced bureaucracy in Belgrade that is quickly crumbling. Serbia, a proud Eastern Orthodox nation brutalized for centuries by Muslim Turkish tyranny and burdened thus by historical-psychological grudges, has been a pro-Communist holdout, lagging behind even Albania.

Perhaps no Communist Party better illustrates the moral decrepitude of Marxism-Leninism than the Serbian Communists. Here is a group of young and middle-aged apparatchiks, led by Slobodan Milosevic, who slept through the 1989 turmoil in Eastern Europe secure in their villas and hunting lodges, without bothering to make the slightest gesture toward reform. Their secret: a direct appeal to ethnic hatred. The party became a vehicle for fascist-oriented Serbs to attack Muslim Albanians and Catholic Croats. But now, as the recent riots show, many Serbs have themselves revolted against Milosevic. Theoretically, this should be a good thing, and the media quickly interpreted it as such. But the protest leaders in Belgrade were not against Communist control merely for the sake of economic and political freedom. There is a strong nationalist-mystical edge to their movement. They hold that as long as Serbia is weighed down by communism, it cannot successfully confront the historical enemies that surround it.

To understand Serbian passions is to go a long way toward deciphering Yugoslavia. The Serbs are heir to a rich medieval kingdom, with a traveling court, a literature, and an artistic inheritance more wondrous than any in the Balkans and rivaling those of the West. The frescoes in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Serbian monasteries suggest that had the Turks not invaded and destroyed all, the Renaissance in painting would have been a Serbian invention rather than an Italian one. "The greatness of Italy was constructed over our bones," a nun at the Grachanitsa monastery sadly told me.

The Turks not only arrested artistic and economic development, they also converted thousands of Albanians to Islam. And it is these Muslim Albanians who, with their high birthrate, have demographically claimed Serbia's most hallowed ground: what Serbs like to think of as "Old Serbia," the Judea and Samaria of the Serbian national consciousness, the place where the medieval kingdom emerged and grew to greatness, now known to the world as "Kossovo," on the southern border of Serbia proper. Kossovo is dotted with Serbian monasteries and settlements, enclaves of extreme nationalism with obvious similarities to those in the West Bank. From the end of World War II, the Serbs have ruled Kossovo as an autonomous province within the Republic of Serbia. At first they tried to pacify the Albanians by building schools and modernizing the infrastruc-

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ture. In 1981 Albanian university students revolted in a revolution of higher expectations. The Albanian intifada is a decade old this month.

Serbia's struggle with Croatia, to the north, dates only to the beginning of this century. Racially, the Serbs and Croats are one Slavic people. Moreover, though the Serbs use the Cyrillic alphabet and the Croats the Latin one, the language (Serbo-Croatian) is basically the same in both places. What divides Serbs and Croats is religion and tradition. When Yugoslavia emerged after World War I, with Serbia as the dominant force and the Serbian royal house of Karageorgevitch given dominion over the Croats, hatred of Serbs took root with a vengeance in Croatia: Croats, a Catholic nation with Austrian customs, bristled under the rule of the Orthodox Serbs and what the Croats regarded as their Turkish backwardness. The Vatican consistently encouraged the Croats in this attitude. The Croatian Catholic Church is on record as having rejoiced over the creation of the Nazi puppet state of Croatia in 1941, under whose aegis more than half a million Serbs were likely put to death. But the Serbs were not compensated for their sufferings after the war. Instead, Tito, half-Croat, half-Slovene, curtailed the power of the Serbs in the new Communist Yugoslavia.

The Serbs are thus a bitter people, and their bitterness is fortified by a morbid fascination with their own defeats. Despite a retinue of victorious kings, the Serbian national hero is a certain Prince Lazar, who fought only one major battle, against the Turks in 1389, which he lost. When Lazar's remains toured Serbia in 1988, prior to the 600th anniversary of the battle, shrieking mourners surrounded the coffin at every stop. It was a hysteria eerily reminiscent of the Shiite mourners in Karbala at the bier of Imam Husain, another shadowy figure of failure, defeated by a Sunni army in Iraq in the seventh century.

The way in which Orthodox Serbia comes to terms with its past will eventually determine its ability to compromise with Catholic Croats and Muslim Albanians, a process that will ricochet into the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where Serbs and Croats also confront each other; as well as into the republics of Montenegro and Macedonia, whose Orthodox Christian peoples face, like the Serbs, a demographic threat from the Muslim Albanians. Milosevic, keep in mind, first rose to prominence by coming to Kossovo and shaking his fist at the Albanian-populated countryside, shouting, "*Never again.*"

Now, with the crumbling of the federal government and the arming of militias in Serbia and Croatia, the likely flash point is the Serbian minority in southern Croatia, which wants its villages joined to Serbia—a move that Croats warn they will interpret as a casus belli. The Yugoslav federal army seems poised to declare martial law. If the army (which is overwhelmingly Serb) deploys outside Serbia's borders, Croatians and others would violently resist: practically every grown man in Yugoslavia owns a gun. But the army itself appears split over what to do. Remember that the very unworkability of the Yugoslav federation, which fuels so much of the discontent, is due to a system of overlapping bureaucracies whose self-canceling actions may serve to impede and postpone the drive toward civil war. This is why Yugoslavian politics have been likened to a couple continuously making love but unable to achieve a climax. It could yet happen that such institutional circuit-breakers will work to avoid the worst, while anti-Communist forces in Serbia proceed to topple Milosevic, prior to negotiating a looser, more streamlined relationship with the other republics.

Violently or not, the most serious political and religious issues of the century are about to be worked out in Yugoslavia. The Vatican, whose posture has been nothing but heroic elsewhere in Eastern Europe, is soon to undergo a difficult moral reckoning that will affect the relationship between Western and Eastern Christianity throughout the world: if the Church continues to appear to be stoking the flames of Croatian nationalism rather than supporting reconciliation with the Orthodox Serbs, Pope John Paul II's pronouncements about "Christian unity" will forever ring hollow. But don't expect much of this to surface in the media reports.

ROBERT D. KAPLAN is completing his book *Balkan Ghosts* with a grant from the Madison Center for Educational Affairs.

The wars of Muslim resentment.

ISLAM DUNK

By David S. Landes

On one level the war in the Persian Gulf was a fight over wealth, frontiers, and political piracy. As seen by the historian, however, it was one more chapter in the millennial conflict between Europe (now the West) and Islam. This is not what our governments tell us, for fear of the dread implications. But it is what the Muslims of the world were saying in their vocal, passionate support for Saddam Hussein and Iraq.

This was the single most momentous feature of the conflict. For all the brutality of the Iraqi occupation, Saddam found support not only in Arab lands, but also in such non-Arab Muslim countries as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, even Iran. Everywhere in dar-el-Islam crowds denounced the very presence of infidel soldiers on sacred Muslim soil. "This is a war against all Arabs and all Muslims and not against Iraq alone,"

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said King Hussein of Jordan. The order of preference was clear: a bloody, atheistic Muslim tyrant is still better than American imperialists. Family is family.

This appeal to a fundamental religious conflict took the Western powers by surprise. Why can't these people be more like us and stick to questions of oil and the rules of proper international behavior? The answer is that religion matters far more in the Muslim world than in the secularized societies of Christendom; and the past matters more than the future. Their calendar begins in the seventh century with the prophet Muhammad and the great triumphs of small forces against mighty enemies—an unexampled expansion that can be explained only by the will and favor of Allah. The resulting Arab great realm, which ran from Persia in the east to the Atlantic in the west and rested on the mass conversion of subject populations to Islam, became a vast common market of commerce and industry; it was the mother of great architecture and design; above all, it became a world leader in learning and science, well ahead of Christian Europe.

The Muslim conquest reached its limit in Western Europe in the eighth century, when Frankish armies turned back the Saracens near Poitiers in what is now France. But that was not the end of Muslim expansion. Five hundred years later another attack came from the southeast: over a period of centuries the Turks destroyed the Byzantine empire, took the Balkans and the Danube basin, and pushed on two occasions (1529 and 1683) as far as the gates of Vienna. Meanwhile Islam resumed its drive to the east, spreading into India (the Mughal empire), central Asia and parts of China, Southeast Asia (Malaysia and Indonesia) as far as the Philippines, and southward to Africa, especially along the Indian Ocean. This was a dynamic religion, easy to adopt, zealous in belief, fierce in war. Its emphasis on the equality of believers and simplicity of ritual and practice had great appeal for the polytheistic and animistic tribal populations it encountered.

For a millennium, then, Islam could proudly think of itself as dominant. There were, inevitably, setbacks and limits, but the House of Islam remained intact. The one effort at Christian penetration ended in failure: the final liquidation of the Crusader kingdoms came to be seen as evidence that all was still right with the world and gave birth to a metaphor that continues to inform the political discourse of the region: the Crusaders were "driven into the sea." To be sure, these successes could not compensate for the fact that the original unity could not be maintained. The recollection of ancient caliphs ruling all of Islam from Baghdad or Damascus and joining political to religious authority was now reduced to a dream. But as the Christian expectation of a second coming shows, dreams can be a powerful stimulus and enduring consolation. Arabs today continue to cherish the nostalgia of a single nation, and Saddam appealed to that vision as the man who would make it come true.

These continuing territorial gains were misleading, concealing a profound loss in intellectual energy and creativity. In the centuries that followed the first Crusade, Europe underwent a technological and economic revolution that enormously enhanced its power vis-à-vis the rest of the world, including Islam. As a result, when Europe made its next big move into the Islamic world in the sixteenth century, rounding Africa and coming into the Indian Ocean from the south, it was able to establish and maintain maritime supremacy and to eliminate Muslim intermediaries from the most lucrative trades. The superiority in firepower was decisive: the instructions to Cabral, admiral of the second Portuguese Indies fleet of 1501, were not to look for trouble, but if an adversary threatened, blow him out of the water from a distance. (Essentially the same tactic was applied in the Gulf war: break down from afar the enemy's capacity to fight.)

This Western superiority continued to widen, especially after the Industrial Revolution. Europeans established themselves in previously Muslim domains (India, Indonesia, Malaysia); broke off and took over the component parts of the old Ottoman empire (Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Syria, Iraq); established protectorates over such nominally independent countries as Persia. All of this gave rise in the Muslim world to feelings of humiliation and despair. There were, to be sure, some efforts at reform and regeneration, the most important of which was the premature attempt of Mohammed Ali of Egypt (who reigned 1805-48) to import and acclimate the technology of European industrialization.

This was the first major attempt outside of the West to effect an industrial revolution. The effort failed because Egyptian society was not ready and because Mohammed Ali's recourse to forced labor was an invitation to resistance and sabotage. Besides, in what was to become a pattern for Middle East strong men, he succumbed to the temptation of military conquest. In 1832 his army advanced almost to the gates of Constantinople, and it took a Russian naval squadron to save the Ottoman state, and then British pressure to expel him from Palestine and Syria. The European powers preferred a toothless old dog to a young tiger, and Mohammed Ali was more prudent than Saddam Hussein and pulled back.

The low point for the dar-el-Islam came in 1948-49, with the establishment of the state of Israel, and in 1967, with the humiliating defeat of the new Saladin, Gamal Abdel Nasser, and the loss of the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem. These setbacks in Palestine were the more flagrant because the postwar years were otherwise a time of major gains for the Arabs and for Islam: the end of the mandates in Syria and Iraq; independence for India, Pakistan, and Malaya; Algerian vic-

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tory over France. And these setbacks were the more painful because the Jews were seen as unworthy adversaries. The Arabs could understand losing battles to the great powers of Europe; but not to a weak nation whose people had always been treated as inferiors and were known in pre-1948 Palestine as "children of death," meaning they could be dealt with at will. It is in this deeper thematic sense that there was linkage between the seizure of Kuwait and the occupation of the West Bank—not in the alleged similarity between one and the other occupation, but in their portentous meaning for the Muslim world, the one a sign of strength, the other of weakness.

And it is in this sense that one has to understand Saddam. He is another in the series of would-be Saladins, heroes and conquerors who would restore the unity of old and revive the glory of classical Islam. The first was Mohammed Ali; Nasser, the second. Saddam would have been best endowed for this role not by his vision or his statesmanship, but by his resources. He had oil, and oil for the Arab world has been the hope and instrument of redemption. Can it be an accident that Allah has put so much of the world's petroleum resources in Muslim hands?

Hence the importance of Saddam's move into Kuwait. For the West it was an aggression; for the popular masses of the Arab world it was a first step on the road to reunion and rebirth. Give Iraq the oil of the Gulf and it could hold the world for ransom. By this reasoning, those Arab leaders who joined the coalition to defeat Saddam were traitors to the larger Arab national interest. They were well aware of the dangers this view presented for them; hence they emphasized that they were fighting Saddam and not Iraq, and called for no diminution or partition of Iraq as a result of the war.

The preceding analysis does not permit one to predict the consequences of the Gulf war. Much depends on the accidents of great power politics and diplomacy. But it does tell us something about what the war and victory can and cannot do. It will not, for example, put an end to what we may call the Nasserist, pan-Arab impulses in Middle Eastern politics. These derive from deep, long-standing aspirations that will not be nullified by defeat; on the contrary, like all millenarian visions, they thrive and are nourished by disappointment.

This is not to say that the Arabs will not be divided. Rivalry among competing sheikhs and clans (it is hard to speak of nations in the Western sense) has been a constant of Arab politics for more than a thousand years, and this last war was an excellent example of the primacy of politics and interest: in spite of all Saddam's pan-Arab rhetoric, the coalition did not fall apart. (It might have, had Israel entered the war.) But one should not count on the tenacity of any given alliance, for advantage is not the same as friendship; nor should one mistake short-run interests for long-run aspirations, or repressed opinion for the limits of enthusiasm. For the Arab masses, the dream is still of a savior, a *mahdi*, who will set history aright and renew the days of old.

Nor will the war by itself reverse the apparent inability of the Middle Eastern states to take advantage of their wealth and catch up with the modern world. Part of the reason is the very suddenness of that wealth. As any student of economic history knows, windfall wealth is more curse than blessing: it encourages anti-productive attitudes, a preference for play, a reluctance to work, a prodigality that is the enemy of good investment, a dependence on others. It is always easier to spend money than to make it; the oil will not last forever; and if present trends continue, future generations of economists will take as one of their favorite problems the question of how the industrial world managed to transfer so much capital to the Middle East and then get it all back, because the oil-producing countries have not been using it for income-generating investment. An agreement to limit arms sales to the area would no doubt help by preventing them from wasting so much of their wealth, but given the ingenuity of arms dealers and the greed or need of producers, a change in purpose and attitude on the part of Middle Eastern states would be more effective.

Of course such a change is not likely so long as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains open. What better reason and pretext for the accumulation of weapons? (No sooner is the Gulf war over than Egypt, poor Egypt, is asking the United States for a squadron or two of the latest fighter planes. To fight against whom?) The hope is that a great international conference will solve the problem. But history offers little comfort. A conference can settle only those issues that are ready to be settled, on both sides. Otherwise, it can at best postpone the reckoning: witness the Congress of Berlin of 1878, which tried to arrange the affairs of the Balkans; it was followed by two more Balkan wars and set the stage for Sarajevo and World War I. Or Versailles, which tried to liquidate the damages of four years of world war and reconstitute the concert of nations: it set the stage for Hitler and World War II.

Given the nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its symbolic significance for the larger Arab world, given the gleeful Arab responses to the bombing of civilians in Israel, it is hard to envisage an enduring solution coming out of any conference. The war has shown to Israelis that the Arabs hate them and has convinced them, if they were not convinced before, that a Palestinian state on the West Bank would not be the end of their peril. The difficulty of finding and destroying Scud-launchers has also taught them that hand-launched rockets from a few miles away would be even harder to stop short of a reoccupation of territory.

Meanwhile, on the Arab side, the Gulf war revived the exaltation of 1967 and renewed Arab calls for the

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outright destruction of Israel. This has always been the great weakness of the Palestinians: in their hearts, a whole loaf, or even no loaf, looks better than a half. So defeat was interpreted as a moral victory: Saddam, we were told by Palestinians in Amman on the day the war ended, will be a hero for 2,000 years, and mothers will continue generation after generation to name their children after him. He stood up, after all, to a terrible coalition of thirty powers; he bombed Israel; he has given and will continue to give terrible weapons to the Arab nation; he has shown the way.

The Arab-Israeli conflict, moreover, is only part of the larger picture. If it ended tomorrow, the Arab states would still be vying for power; tyrants would still be tyrannizing; new villains would have to be invented and cultivated; governments in the region would still be unstable; the Arab masses would still be clamoring for the fruits of prosperity and modernization. Here, unfortunately, social and religious values pose serious obstacles. It would be wrong to generalize about Islam and treat it as some kind of uniform influence, for like all religions, it is susceptible to diverse interpretation. But societies get the kinds of interpretations they want, and many Muslims have a preference for interpretations that are unsuited to modern living.

Take just one example, but a crucial one: the status of women. The social and spatial segregation of women in many Muslim societies, their relative exclusion from most occupations and professions, the limitation of their education, the precocity of marriage and frequency of births—all of this is presented as protective of women's dignity and psychologically reassuring. But what is often forgotten is that, besides being bad for women, this is also bad for men, making them think of themselves as privileged, encouraging self-indulgence and pretentious machismo, emphasizing the appearance of dignity over the reality of performance. Machismo to this degree is an impediment to economic development and an encouragement to aggression.

So what does a historian make of all this? First that this war was a lot smaller and easier than the one that would surely have followed had Saddam been allowed to enjoy the fruits of his aggression. Second, that the peace will be a lot harder than the war. This conflict will not ease until the Muslim world modernizes to the point of feeling comfortable in its place and identity, until it develops a civil society in which individuals think for themselves and do not put their trust in heroes and princes. For that it needs some progressive social and cultural revolutions, the kind that build rather than destroy. Piracy is easier; that's why Saddam grabbed Kuwait.

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Bad to the last drop.

MAXWELL'S HOUSE

By Tom Bower

In London's satirical rag *Private Eye*, there's a comic strip called "Cap'n Bob." It portrays the British media magnate Robert Maxwell, the gargantuan owner of the British tabloid *The Daily Mirror* and a variety of other papers, as the megalomaniacal head of a band of pirates. His editors are drawn as parrots. His ship is perpetually in danger of sinking. This running joke of Britain has now bought one of America's leading newspapers, *The New York Daily News*.

The story of Robert Maxwell is colorful and bizarre. He was born Jan Ludvik Hoch in 1923 in Slatinske Doly, a small village wedged between the jagged Carpathian mountains on the Czech-Romanian border. The son of a cattle dealer, he grew up in a poor Orthodox Jewish community. Had Hitler not occupied Czechoslovakia, Maxwell probably would have immigrated to America. Instead, in 1940, he sailed to Britain with the Czech Legion and joined the British army. During the invasion of Europe Maxwell won the Military Cross for outstanding bravery, and by the time he arrived in Berlin in July 1945 the Yiddish-speaking youth had been transformed into a clean-cut, Oxbridge-accented English officer whose ambition, he confided to his new French-born wife, was to "make my fortune and get into Parliament." Within a couple of decades, he had done both.

Appointed a press officer of the British military government in Berlin, Maxwell soon forged personal contacts with German newspaper and book publishers, including Ferdinand Springer, then Germany's largest scientific publisher. In 1947 Maxwell resigned from the army and contracted to distribute Springer's huge store of scientific publications from London. Like hundreds of other business deals that followed, Maxwell's arrangement with Springer ended in acrimony, not least because the ambitious upstart had established his own rival publishing company, Pergamon Press.

Maxwell's fortune, however, was not made through normal publishing ventures. Besides colorful international barter deals and general trading, it was accumulated during a long and shadowy relationship with the Communist rulers of Russia and Eastern Europe. It began after his first flight to Moscow in 1949, where, for a pittance, Pergamon secured the exclusive rights in the West to publish Russian and Eastern European scientific journals. From then on, cozying up to Communists

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became a kind of métier for Maxwell. In the preface of the 1983 Pergamon biography of Nicolae Ceausescu, subtitled *Builder of Modern Romania and International Statesman*, Maxwell praised the tyrant for his "constant, tireless activity for the good of the country." Maxwell was similarly flattering in the biographies of Leonid Brezhnev, Gustav Husak, and Todor Zhivkov, who in 1983 awarded Maxwell the Order of Stara Planina, first class, the Communists' highest honor.

In Warsaw in 1985 Maxwell stood alongside General Wojciech Jaruzelski and declared: "Solidarity is dead." On the twentieth anniversary of the Berlin Wall Maxwell wrote in the preface to another Pergamon book, "I have the honor of presenting to the public ... the life and work of Erich Honecker." One chapter of Honecker's autobiography was a self-congratulatory account of how the author had masterminded the Wall's construction, which he concluded, "fills me with satisfaction." That relationship was publicly reaffirmed on October 2, 1989, a month before the Berlin Wall was breached, when Maxwell ceremoniously presented Honecker with two leather-bound Pergamon volumes of the *Encyclopaedia of the German Democratic Republic* (price, $190 per set). As the cameras whirred, the dictator and the publisher, seemingly oblivious to the political earthquake in the streets outside the Central Committee headquarters, greeted each other as old friends.

ROBERT MAXWELL BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Maxwell's rise to fame accelerated in 1959 when, sufficiently rich to step confidently into London's limelight, he sought election to Parliament. But his career as a Labour MP was fairly brief and unsuccessful, marked chiefly by the scorn of his colleagues, who mocked the "socialist millionaire" and his eagerness for establishment acceptance. (In 1964, after his first election, he called the *Jewish Chronicle* to demand a published correction stating that he was a practicing member of the Church of England.)

Meanwhile, Maxwell's business career seemed to be failing. Thanks to his articulate self-promotion as a brilliant businessman, he had talked up Pergamon's stock to record highs. But in 1969, in the wake of his failure to buy the British tabloid *The News of the World* and his secret concern about the true value of his "empire," he approached Saul Steinberg, then a 29-year-old millionaire, first to consider investing in and later to bid for Pergamon. But Steinberg's investigations revealed that Maxwell's glowing accounts deliberately concealed staggering losses. In an unprecedented censure, a government inquiry declared that Maxwell was "unfit to exercise proper stewardship of a publicly quoted company." In 1970 he was defeated in the parliamentary election. The outsider became an outcast.

Maxwell, however, rebounded. He had secretly transferred critical controlling powers over the publicly owned Pergamon company to his family-owned private company, which was registered in a secret Liechtenstein tax haven. By 1974 he regained control of Pergamon, by then a private company. And in 1980, after a dawn raid on the nearly bankrupt British Printing Corporation, then Europe's biggest printer, Maxwell once again controlled a public company. By crushing entrenched trade union fiefdoms, Maxwell restored BPC's fortunes, which were used in 1984 to finance his $170 million bid for the Mirror Group of four newspapers. Overnight Maxwell became Rupert Murdoch's biggest rival in Britain.

Maxwell prides himself that, like Murdoch, whose success has been a pathological obsession for twenty-five years, he is a natural newspaperman whose personal involvement excites readers' interest. He ignores the fact that at least a dozen newspapers have folded under his ownership and that ex-editors blame his interference for their downfall. Immediately after his takeover of *The Daily Mirror*, the paper quickly lost half a million sales. He was undaunted, and continues to intervene in all editorial decisions. In 1987, when he launched a twenty-four-hour London daily that

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folded after five months and $50 million in losses, he blamed "the professionals whom I didn't sufficiently control."

It is Maxwell's sheer energy and profitable deals in property, stocks, and currency speculation (all beyond the world of newspapers) that compelled Britain's financial and political establishment to re-embrace him. He basked in an image of international consequence, with his fleet of helicopters, a personal jet, a luxury yacht purchased from Adnan Khashoggi's brother, and a succession of vast and elaborate parties where his uninhibited consumption of delicacies seemed visibly to increase his 220-pound girth. The image was reinforced by frequent appearances of his photograph in his own newspapers, by the specially woven carpet in his office bearing a capital M in every square, and by an avalanche of aggressive takeover bids. His lifestyle provoked one of his many New York brokers to complain, "He's got the foreplay and orgasm all mixed up."

All along Maxwell had presented himself as a British publisher who also specialized in printing (about which he is an expert); who owned cable and TV interests (which were comparatively minuscule and have now been sold); and who controlled a generally profitable but odd mix of other media interests, including information technology resources. To reach Murdoch's status, Maxwell needed to own more newspapers.

Among his earlier forays had been the bid to buy the *New York Post* from Murdoch. The seller allowed his old foe to publicize his interest before delivering a crushing snub and selling elsewhere. Undeterred, Maxwell bid for the *National Enquirer*, again unsuccessfully. He hired an aggressive public relations agency and was subsequently presented as a man of consequence in detailed articles in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Then in 1989 he hired John Tower as a lobbyist and ensured that he was seen and photographed in the "right" company, like former President Reagan.

Throughout the late '80s he repeatedly predicted that his public company, Maxwell Communications Corporation, would expand threefold by 1990 into a "$3 to $5 billion media corporation" to rank alongside Murdoch's as one of the world's ten biggest. He could realize his ambition only by purchasing a Goliath in the United States. After a failed bid for Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Maxwell's breakthrough was his tenacious and successful battle for Macmillan, Inc., in November 1988. He outmaneuvered the most aggressive of New York's financial and legal talent, buying the publishing company for $2.6 billion, and then again generously outbid his opposition by paying $750 million for the *Official Airlines Guide*. It was mostly borrowed money. Feeling pinched by the lack of opportunities in Europe, he announced that 80 percent of his interests were now to be concentrated in America. The Macmillan victory afforded Maxwell the first opportunity since Murdoch's victory in 1969 to equal the Australian.

But the Macmillan success also bequeathed a mammoth debt. Maxwell's solution was to dismantle and sell most of his printing empire and talk up the price of his stock to maintain the collateral of his new acquisitions. A familiar cycle soon recurred: the brokers and analysts dissected his results, watched his share price falling to an all-time low, and suggested that his accountants might have been imaginative, albeit legally. Nevertheless, he has still behaved as if he were a member of The Club in a ringside seat. He recently bid $100 million for the *National Examiner*, the *Sun*, and the *Globe*, but then pulled out.

Meanwhile Maxwell has tried to take advantage of the new free press market in Eastern Europe. First, of course, he had to downplay his previous connections with the countries. Despite Pergamon's enormous and long-standing business with the Eastern bloc, Maxwell last year asserted to *The Guardian* that over the past forty years he had "only sold a few books and journals" from Eastern Europe on which he had earned "no money." He subsequently embroidered his story. Trade with the Communists, he explained, "never accounted for more than 0.001 percent of my business. It was done as a service at the request of the U.S. government. It was a five-year program which was loss-making."

These days Maxwell has purchased minority holdings in former Communist Party newspapers in Germany and Hungary, which used to boast huge circulations but now lack both advertising and sales revenue. Last year he also started a new newspaper, *The European*, a limp imitation of *USA Today*. The paper's launch, accompanied by Maxwell's own headline, "I Am The European," boasted that circulation would be 600,000 copies daily. Instead, he is now the proprietor of a weekly, which he claims sells around 250,000 copies.

Maxwell's purchase of the *Daily News* is typical of his entire career. It is based on a certain amount of bluff and bluster; it is designed as much for his personal vanity as for business success. It is also shrouded in mystery because the purchaser is a secret Liechtenstein trust, not his public company. By nature he is a gambler and a juggler who has never shaken off the sobriquet that stuck after his first publishing failure in 1954: the Bouncing Czech. The probability of failure will not ruin his pleasure for the first weeks. Then, as the losses mount he will, true to form, issue dire ultimatums, dismissal notices, cast blame on everyone with one exception, and assess the resale property value of the empty buildings of the *Daily News* in anticipation of the final closure. As Cap'n Bob sets anchor in the New World, Americans would do well to greet him with the skepticism felt by those who already know him well.

TOM BOWER is the author of *Maxwell, The Outsider*, an unauthorized biography published in 1988 (Aurum Press, London).

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The Emir looks to his own house.

ROLLS-ROYCE REVOLUTIONARIES

By Michael Kelly

KUWAIT CITY

Six days after the Iraqis stole away in the night, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers brought in the first supplies requested by the Kuwaiti government to rebuild their stripped and junked country. Food for the hungry? Water for the thirsty? Generators for the darkened city? Well, no. The first convoy carried furniture for the emir.

The truckloads of new sofas, beds, tables, and chairs were not for His Majesty Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's primary home. The occupiers had, in their hallmark style, looted, burned, and shat up that pleasant old palace. The Bayan Palace, where the emir is hanging out these days, is not even his second home. It is either No. 3 or No. 4, and he rarely stays there. Still, the emir's new house really is a very, very, very fine house.

From the outside it looks rather like a community college campus, a collection of squat concrete boxes grouped around trim lawns and simple gardens. But inside it's all Trump Tower and Rodeo Drive. The architect's principal idea seems to have been: say it with marble. The hallways and staircases are marble. The bathtubs and sinks are marble. Even the trash cans are marble. All of this marble comes from the quarries of Carrara, cut there in what the Italian stonecutters call matchbox, so that each polished piece precisely matches its neighbors, in creamy slabs of white, beige, pink, blue, and black, with rich Roqueforty veins running from panel to panel in perfectly synchronized streaks. The look is so buttery-rich it seems you could scoop out a little spoonful of wall and spread it on a piece of bread, if there were any bread in the emir's city.

The palace's main buildings are situated in clusters of three, each named after a Kuwaiti island in the Persian Gulf. Every building has a ground floor reception area and three floors of suites, two to a floor and each comprising five bedrooms, a like number of bathrooms, a kitchen, a dining room, a Cabinet-level conference room, and a couple of sitting rooms. The bedroom and sitting room walls are dressed in watered silk or blond wood; the bathroom fixtures are gold-plated; the private kitchens are state-of-the-art in techno-cuisine; the beds are appropriately king-sized; the bathtubs are oval; the carpets are toe-wriggling plush. The flatware is sterling, each piece engraved with a crest that denotes which building it belongs to. The tablecloths and napkins are Irish linen, and they too are embroidered with crests. The doorknobs are brass, the bolsters and valances are satin, and the big chandeliers are crystal.

All of this had to be fixed up properly—stolen marble balustrades and gold shower heads replaced, denuded walls re-silked, the 2-million-gallon reservoir tanked up—before the emir, who sat out the war in the Saudi Arabian resort town of Taif, would come home. Some people suggested that Kuwait's leader had not returned to lead his struggling nation until fifteen days after its liberation because he was concerned about his security in a city where the streets were filled with youths with guns and the air with falling bullets. Not at all, assured Sulaiman Al-Mutawa, Kuwait's minister of planning. The delay was entirely caused by the need "to find a suitable place for him to live in."

The job of rendering the Bayan Palace suitable fell to Wayne Urbine, a Corps of Engineers supervisor from Savannah, Georgia. On the afternoon of March 14, a few hours before the emir's plane was to touch down, Urbine showed me around the second building in the Bubiyan cluster. The place was due for completion the following afternoon, and it was hopping, the only scene of intense reconstruction work I saw in two weeks in Kuwait City. On the door to every room a little yellow Post-it note was stuck, enumerating the details within left to be attended ("Remove valance . . . replace molding on bathroom door . . ."). One hundred and twenty workmen were moving about, from room to room, floor to floor, and as they finished each chore, one of Urbine's undersupervisors would check it off.

The crews, Urbine said, generally worked twelve-hour days but had pulled some all-nighters in order to finish the million-dollar job in its allotted ten days. Members of the royal family, he said, visited regularly—"a constant circus"—to check on progress. "Everything has to be visually outstanding," he said. "The cousin of the crown prince is here all the time. . . . The crown prince also came by last weekend to check it out and was very delighted with the way it was coming. The minister of labor was here yesterday. He sat down in the chairs to test them and made a few comments about

MICHAEL KELLY is TNR's special correspondent in the Gulf region.

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the wallpaper. He said the chandeliers looked OK."

The whole scene bothered Urbine a bit. "It's sort of a value question," he said. "You go out there and see thousands of people in line to make a phone call and you come here and see all this opulence and someone is complaining because there aren't enough damn gold fixtures."

There did seem to be, on the day of the royal return, plenty of concerns of a more pressing moment than bathroom accessories. Garbage lined the streets in smelly, rotting hills. Running water existed only in some city mains and a few of the big hotels. There was no electricity other than that provided by generators, and there were very few generators. Food distribution finally had begun several days before but was limited mostly to a bare list of basics: rice, milk, sugar, cooking oil, and tomato paste. Trucks carrying electric generators, water, and food had been stalled for days at the border of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, thanks to the Kuwaiti government's insistence on changing its customs requirements, it seemed, about every two hours.

Then there was the misplaced enthusiasm that the government, or at least young gun-toting men in army uniforms purporting to represent the government, seemed to have for the more unsavory aspects of life under martial law. Although the State Department professed ignorance of any mistreatment of Palestinians and other non-Kuwaiti residents, U.S. officials here said otherwise. Andrew Natsios, the director of disaster relief for the Agency for International Development and a major in the Army's Kuwait emergency task force, put the number of disappeared Palestinians at "on the low side, between 200 and 300, on the high side, between 500 and 600." At the Iraq-Kuwait border town of Safwan, U.S. military police officers said men dressed as Kuwait soldiers had taken to dumping busloads of Palestinian, Iraqi, and North African prisoners in the no man's land. "They dumped twenty-five yesterday," said MP Steve Eaton. "They came up here, stopped, and told them to get out and start walking. The prisoners didn't have any food, any blankets. Some of them didn't even have shoes."

Apart from roughing up and chucking out undesirables, the Kuwaiti soldiers passed the time demanding identification papers at countless checkpoints and firing clips of machine-gun bullets into the air, the slugs of which bounced down on the sidewalks and bored through the occasional skull. They took a more laid-back approach to the real work of re-establishing control. On the day of the emir's arrival, the beaches and the countryside, and various crannies of the city, were still littered with unexploded Iraqi land mines, American cluster bomblets, and other objects suitable for maiming and killing curious children. Huge numbers of weapons, everything from pistols to armored personnel carriers, had disappeared into private homes, garages, and warehouses in the chaotic days after the war's end. Tales of both random and organized violence were common. A major political opponent of the Sabah family had been shot in the chest in his doorway. Unpleasant rumors swirled about: a secret group called the Men of Jaber was threatening and killing liberal political figures; a secret Syrian army hit team had moved in to do the same. The gloomy conventional wisdom predicted a serious round of bloodletting once the Americans went home.

Returning to a devastated land filled with subjects who had stayed when he had left, and who had suffered greatly for seven months under Iraqi rule, the emir said . . . nothing at all. He knelt and touched his forehead to the tarmac, greeted the several hundred family members, senior government officials, and diplomats he had allowed to attend the homecoming, and was whisked away. The masses were not permitted entry to the heavily guarded scene.

This is, of course, just the sort of thing, right down to the clichés (has there ever been a fabulously wealthy, unfeeling potentate who did not favor gold-plated toilet gewgaws?), that has gotten other rulers their heads handed to them. So it was not surprising that, as the emir sped off to his palace, mutterings of dark discontent could be heard all over town.

At one neighborhood supermarket 400 or so people, mostly women, waited in long lines for a chance to get the few meager supplies the government's new food distribution plan was offering. Unfortunately, the supermarket had closed for the day at noon, and most of those who had waited since 5 a.m. were going home empty-handed. Inside, a store manager lied with broad and smiling abandon. "At home, the people already have everything they need," he said. "Fresh fruits, vegetables, all stored in their homes."

Not far away several hundred Kuwaitis buzzed angrily about a police station. They were trying, they said, to get permission to leave the country temporarily, to buy food, generators, and other necessities. The martial law imposed by the government upon Kuwait City's liberation made that impossible without special permission. "They told us to come here for the piece of paper," said one man. "We have been here since 8:30 this morning, and there is only one little window for us to go to, and now they say the window is closed, so come back tomorrow. It is an outrage!"

The talk of the town hinted at some species of revolution. The Sabah family, which numbers about 2,000, has run Kuwait since the turn of the century, and run it absolutely since Jaber, who acceded to the throne in 1977, dissolved the 1986 National Assembly and suspended the 1962 constitution. There has been some opposition, most seriously in 1989, but political upheaval is not naturally popular in a country where vast oil wealth is spread around in one of the world's most generous welfare systems. A fair idea of the general attitude toward serious political change can be gathered from the 1981 elections, called to form the first National Assembly since 1976. Of the 6 percent of the population allowed to vote (only male Kuwaiti-born citizens, and not all of them), half didn't bother.

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Now the family's political opponents were suddenly uttering the unutterable. "This government should resign," said Abdul Aziz Sultan, a banker and a leading opposition figure. "A government of defeat cannot be a government of reconstruction. . . . The emir has done nothing, and the prime minister is spending all his time going to *diwaniyat* and bullshitting." A few days later the Cabinet of the prime minister, who is also the crown prince, submitted its resignation. The new Cabinet is to be formed by the crown prince, who is also still the prime minister.

Political discussion—indeed, all discussion—in Kuwait is centered on *diwaniyat*, late-afternoon gatherings of men drinking endless cups of tea and sitting in comfortable couches around the walls of large, and generally quite elegant, rooms. A few days before the emir's return, I went to one where I was promised I would find hotheaded, revolution-minded souls. I found a young man named Ahmed Al-Issa. He took me for a ride in his lovely, late-model Mercedes Benz. We went to his house, where he introduced me to two pretty young women who were playing pool in a big room that had white carpets and a superbly stocked bar. He talked moderately tough while the girls pouted and posed with cue sticks. "The Sabah family has a problem," he said. "We all see that the failure of the government has been quite clear, and the government sees that we see this, so they come in with the whip now. But they are incompetent people. All is chaos."

Indeed, there was a striking contrast between the efficiency of the unofficial government established by the Kuwaiti resistance under occupation and the bumbling, lackadaisical approach of the reconstruction. By all accounts the resistance delivered the goods, at least to fellow Kuwaitis. An underground banking system kept hundreds of millions of Kuwaiti and Iraqi dinars in circulation and provided money on a regular basis for those Kuwaitis who had not fled the country. A food distribution network provided ample supplies of canned goods and other basics. Volunteers picked up garbage and policed neighborhoods.

The Marafies, owners of hotels, stores, and other businesses, are one of Kuwait's top families, a leader in the group of twenty-five that the emir formally visits twice a year. They live exceedingly well. Thanks to their money and foresight, they even made do, on T-bone steaks, shrimp, and pâté, during the occupation. They do not normally complain about their good friends the Sabahs. But at a *diwaniya* just before the emir's return, the mood was a touch bitter. "The Sabah family said they would be ready to go as soon as Iraq left Kuwait," said Nader Marafie, moistening his lips with a little sip of tea. "We expected them to take two or three days to get things ready, not three or four weeks. We were told trucks of food were waiting to roll in. They were not. We were told the police force would be ready to come back right away. It was not. This is not good."

The real problem, of course, is the Palestinians. The 450,000 Palestinians of Kuwait, many of whom have been here for decades, made the country work. "The people who know how to run things, the people who always did all the work here, were almost all Palestinians," said one U.S. official involved in the reconstruction. "They were the judges, the doctors, the dentists, practically all the engineers, all the middle managers. The Kuwaitis in charge of things now are politically well connected, but not well versed in technology." A Red Cross official marveled at his difficulties in establishing a coherent relief system. "The people we are dealing with have no concept of the mechanics of actually getting jobs done," he said. "They are very good at talking and sitting and drinking tea all day, but they don't have a clue about things like how to get a lorry from point A to point B."

The obvious solution would be to encourage the 150,000 Palestinians remaining in Kuwait to get back to work, and encourage the thousands who fled to Jordan and elsewhere to return. This is not the solution the emir has in mind. Instead he and his government intend to reduce greatly the number of Palestinians and other foreign-born workers (the Filipino maids and gardeners, the Pakistani hoteliers and sales managers, the Sudanese trash collectors) and replace them with hard-working Kuwaitis. "We proved during the occupation that Kuwaitis are not ashamed of sweeping streets, collecting garbage, working in gas stations," said Nader Marafie, as he lit another cigarette and settled back in the cushions. "So what the government should do is supplement wages in the private sector for people like garbage collectors, and then you will see lots of Kuwaitis doing this."

I changed the subject. Why, if the government was botching the job of getting food and water to Kuwait City, did not the Marafie family, with its vast resources and empty stores waiting to be filled, organize its own shipments? "It is not easy," demurred Nader. "There is no official exchange rate yet, so how could we know what to charge people? Besides, it is not easy to get food. How can we get to Saudi Arabia? Where would we get trucks?"

No, it isn't easy. Although probably not any harder than it was for the Palestinian proprietors of the Al-Sultan Saleem Restaurant, a humble joint in the poor Hawalli neighborhood. By the time the emir came home the Al-Sultan Saleem had been open for a week, serving rough bread, tea, and the Arabic fava-bean dish called *fool* to standing-room-only crowds, taking payment in Kuwait dinars, Iraqi dinars, U.S. dollars, and Saudi royals.

Nader continued: "The government must organize things to make it less difficult." As he was speaking, two members of the royal family dropped in for a surprise visit. They were seated in places of honor, and served tea and ice water, with much bustling and courtesy. The conversation picked up its pleasant hum again, as the *diwaniya* settled into its fourth hour. No one said anything to the royals about the balky pace of the reconstruction, or what the government must do. It would have been impolite, and Kuwaitis are very polite, at least to fellow members of the ruling class. ●

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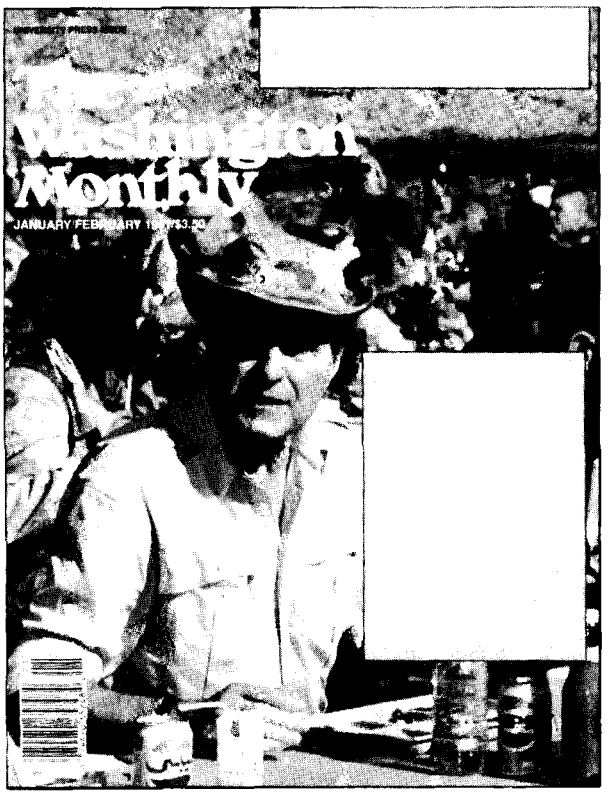

Throughout the Gulf crisis, while the rest of the media acted as cheerleaders for war, we were almost alone in saying it didn't make sense to use our military might to devastate a small country when all we wanted to do was to punish one man. Does that sound odd, even crazy? That's what people said when:

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Mazes

Out of the Warsaw ghetto—I don't need to specify the years—have come stories of courage, devotion, bruised yet persistent pride that make the rest of us feel like pygmies. None of these stories is more humbling yet exalting than that of Janusz Korczak and his 200 children. Betty Jean Lifton gave the whole account of Korczak's life in *The King of Children* (1988). Now, from Poland—a country that manages to keep some embers of anti-Semitism glowing though it has only a few thousand Jews left out of the more than 3 million who were there before Hitler—comes a film that concentrates on Korczak's last three years. It was directed by the celebrated Andrzej Wajda and is called simply **Korczak** (New Yorker).

Korczak, born Henryk Goldszmit, was a Jewish physician, educated in Poland and abroad, who specialized in children, and in more than the clinical sense. He was concerned as much with their social treatment as with their medical care. He formulated a so-called Magna Carta of children's rights, still so pertinent that, in his honor, UNESCO scheduled its Year of the Child, 1978-79, to coincide with the centennial anniversary of his birth.

He wrote novels for children (his pen name became his name for general use) and did popular radio programs in Warsaw that often dealt with children's issues. When the Germans came, he was the director of an orphanage for Jewish children. Through difficulties that don't need retelling here, Korczak and a few colleagues tried to take care of the children. Eventually the Germans took care of *them*. At Treblinka, amid the thousands of other rock monuments, stands one inscribed: "Janusz Korczak (Henryk Goldszmit) and the Children."

How I wish that Wajda's film were better. When I heard that it was forthcoming, my instinctive resistance to fiction about the Holocaust was stayed by the thought that Wajda, at his best, might treat the material in a way that justified its re-creation, with a view through art that enhanced the story instead of merely utilizing it. But *Korczak* is, at most, inoffensive.

The trouble begins with the screenplay by an old Wajda hand, Agnieska Holland. She had no perspective on the material, either in insight or in mode of telling. Her only object was to cram in as much incident and reference as possible in a hurried synoptic manner, not free of coincidences. So we move from an early pre-ghetto reference to Palestine as the land where Jews were free through a ghetto encounter with a German army doctor who just happens to have heard Korczak lecture in Berlin ten years earlier (these are only two of the ticked-off points) to a last sequence that is sheer cotton candy. The freight car in which Korczak and his children are being taken to Treblinka magically detaches itself from the rest of the train. In slow motion the doctor and the children descend from the car and, banner waving, march joyfully across a great field. This pneumatic uplift betrays even the mere literalness of the film.

Wajda has directed with no more imagination and style than if he were making a TV Movie of the Week on this Sunday's interesting topic. Except that he had the sense to use black and white and except for his choice of leading actor, Wajda doesn't even demonstrate the benefits of experience. Every scene is commonplace in treatment; and he has done some editing, especially with explanatory reaction shots, that is dismally heavy-handed. Nothing in the screenplay or directing raises this film, as film, above the banal.

The only vital element is the performance of Korczak. Wojtek Pszoniak, an important actor in the Polish theater, is probably best known here for his Robespierre in one of Wajda's best films, *Danton*. Here he plays Korczak with the fire of a man fueled by love and by impatience that the world can't act on what he takes to be patent truths. There's a manic quality in Korczak that is perhaps one aspect of heroism, an inability to deal with alternatives to whole-souled commitment. Pszoniak captures that quality so thoroughly that his acting almost seems to be struggling against the film in which it is caught.

Wajda was recently elected a senator in Poland and has said that this will be his last film. I hope not. I've never been a Wajda zealot, but I hope he can finish his film career with something more than good intentions.

If Kafka and Buñuel had collaborated on a film, the result would have been better than **City Zero** (Ifex), but there probably would have been some resemblance between the two. In this Soviet film, an engineer from Moscow arrives in a small manufacturing town on business.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Doors. *Oliver Stone's chronicle of Jim Morrison and group is overdone, overlong. Yet through Val Kilmer's performance and Stone's fervor, some of the late 1960s comes back. (Reviewed 4/1/91)* **The Silence of the Lambs.** *Though the screenplay goes flabby, Anthony Hopkins as a suave killer, Tak Fujimoto's lighting, and Jonathan Demme's direction strike terror. (2/18/91)* **Superstar: The Life and Times of Andy Warhol.** *If you think you've had enough of this subject, Chuck Workman's discerning documentary may convince you otherwise. (3/25/91)* **The Vanishing.** *A Dutch thriller. That may sound like an oxymoron, but George Sluizer's tingler is highly intelligent and fiendishly subtle. (3/4/91)* —**SK**

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The weather is drizzly, as it is throughout. He takes a taxi through the grim housing-project streets to his grim hotel and next morning goes to the grim factory where he is to see an executive. After a slight delay at the receptionist's, although he had telephoned ahead, he proceeds down the corridor to the office he wants.

All is quite ordinary, quite gray, so far. He walks into the outer office of the man he is to see, and his immediate reaction is to withdraw. Then he stares. At her desk, typing away, is a pretty young secretary, stark naked. She behaves as if this were quite normal. He manages to state his name, and she buzzes him in. After a minute of attempting to converse with the executive, the engineer mentions that the secretary outside is naked. The executive goes to the door, looks out, says, "So she is," comes back, and resumes the conversation.

This is only the first in a string of incidents that, step by askew step, lead the engineer into a rococo snare. Finally, he is isolated, trapped, in this town far distant from Moscow. I daresay that a Soviet citizen would recognize the practices or historical incidents that are being spoofed—such as the memorial tribute to the couple who first danced to rock 'n' roll in this town—but the combination of Kafka's reality-as-dream, or vice versa, with Buñuel's calm surrealism is sufficient in itself. At the end it isn't so much that we feel that this might happen to us, it's more that possibly it *has* happened and we haven't yet realized it.

This somewhat mad, somewhat frightening screenplay was written by Alexander Borodyansky and Karen Shakhnazarov, who is a man. Shakhnazarov is 40 and has made several previous features, none of which I've seen. He has cast his picture well—Leonid Filatov, the engineer, is exactly prosaic enough to underscore his fantastic fate—and the direction throughout is precise and reticent. Outside of one daring, long-held shot in the engineer's hotel room, which gets almost as crowded as the Marx Brothers' stateroom in *A Night at the Opera*, Shakhnazarov directs without any odd effects or angles. This trim conventionality, like Filatov's performance, makes the bizarreness all the more bizarre. ●

Keats in Harlem

BY JERVIS ANDERSON

My Soul's High Song: The Collected Writings of Countee Cullen, Voice of the Harlem Renaissance edited with an introduction by Gerald L. Early

(Doubleday, 608 pp., $24.95, $14.95 paper)

The years between World War I and the coming of the Great Depression witnessed an extraordinary outburst of African-American writing, its afterglow lasting well into the 1930s. This eruption was unprecedented not only in the amount of poetry and fiction it produced, but also in its racial assertiveness. No earlier period in black literature had been so self-confident, so mass-conscious, so indifferent (for the most part) to conventional social judgment. As Langston Hughes, one of the new poetic voices, wrote in 1926:

> We younger Negro artists . . . intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. . . . If colored people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either.

But there were exceptions among them. Novelists like Jessie Fauset and Nella Imes Larsen, and most notably the poet Countee Cullen, were not so strongly drawn to the craze for dark-skinned proletarian expression. And the aesthetics that Cullen adopted made a decisive and distinguishing imprint upon his writings, virtually all of which Gerald Early has assembled in *My Soul's High Song*. Still, if Cullen sang in a more exalted key than most of his contemporaries did, his work was an important part of the literary outpouring known as the Harlem or New Negro Renaissance.

Unlike the explosion in jazz, which had been gathering energy and shaping idioms in the regional laboratories of New Orleans, Memphis, St. Louis, Oklahoma City, Kansas City, Chicago, and New York, the literary renaissance movement in the 1920s and 1930s sprang up in Manhattan, chiefly in Harlem, from which its spirit radiated to young writers in other areas of the country. Among the probable reasons for this, two are prominent. Manhattan was the center of publishing; and Harlem—after some years of attracting migrants from all sections of the United States and the Caribbean—had become the "City of Refuge," the "Promised Land," the "Black Mecca," or the "Negro Capital." By whatever name its early black inhabitants called it, Harlem was, or would continue to become, the largest, densest, and most socially vibrant black urban community in America. Not surprisingly, the "pullulation of energy . . . in the Negro town of Harlem" (as John Chamberlain, a former literary critic for *The New York Times*, described it) "flowed into the novel, into poetry, into the short story." And it was the abundance of that flow that helped to produce the Harlem or New Negro literary renaissance.

But its origins also owed something to the secret (or not-so-secret) influence of black political radicalism, which New York City accommodated more hospitably than did other regions of America and the British West Indies. Harlem was where a considerable number of New Negro political radicals, as they called themselves, had settled by the second decade of the century. It was where the great black-nationalist orator Marcus Garvey, a native of Jamaica, founded his Africa-inspired mass movement in 1917. And it was where, during the war, most of the militant black journals in the country were being written and edited by American- and Caribbean-born intellectuals: A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen (*The Messenger*); Hubert Harrison (*The Voice* and *The New Negro*); Cyril Briggs (*The Crusader*); William H. Ferris (*The Negro World*); William Bridges (*The Challenger*); and Wilfred A. Domingo (*The Emancipator*).

Much from those publications, and from Garvey's black-nationalist speeches, must surely have helped to inspire the emerging New Negro literature. Indeed, it was the view of Benjamin Brawley, a contemporary black critic, that Garvey's influence was "inestimable." In Harlem, where he was received as a "Black Moses," a prophet of Africa's awakening, Garvey quickly became the most stirring spokesman for black pride, self-assertion, and self-determination. Most of his listeners may not have been so impressed by his grandiose dream of leading the black diaspora on a return to Africa, but, Brawley felt, "he had given to the soul of the Negro a new sense of freedom."

By 1920 a number of the younger creative writers had been living in Harlem for some time. Others soon moved there,

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drawn by its vitality and its magnetism as a promised land of progressive black consciousness. Even those who never lived there found their imaginations stirred by what they heard and read about Harlem. "With the whole group," Brawley recalled, Harlem was "an obsession." Because it "was close to the publishers' houses, and because most of the Negroes in the metropolis lived there," it was regarded "in a literary way" as the "center of the Negro world."

In 1917 the literary magazine *Seven Arts*, whose editors were in revolt against the genteel tradition of American writing, published a sonnet titled "The Harlem Dancer":

Applauding youths
laughed with young
prostitutes
And watched her perfect,
half-clothed body
sway;
. . . . . .
She sang and danced on
gracefully and calm,
the light gauze hanging
loose about her
form;
. . . . . .
Upon her swarthy neck
black shiny curls
Luxuriant fell; and
tossing coins in
praise,
The wine-flushed, bold-
eyed boys, and even
the girls,
Devoured her shape with
eager, passionate
gaze;
But looking at her falsely-
smiling face,
I knew her self was not in
that strange place.

Eli Edwards, the pseudonymous author, was in fact Claude McKay, then a virtually unknown 26-year-old Jamaican living in Harlem. His sonnet, which may have been rejected by the genteel publications, was an early example of Harlem-based New Negro writing, with its strong interest in the textures and problems of mass experience.

That wasn't, of course, the sole focus of the new literature. A number of the writers concerned themselves mainly with the experience of the black middle class—either because they belonged to it or because they felt duty-bound to present only the more respectable versions of black social life. "Negroes should be concerned with making good impressions," Countee Cullen wrote in 1928. "Every phase of Negro life should not be the white man's concern. The parlor should be large enough for his entertainment and instruction."

But whatever it became by 1928, the New Negro phenomenon had emerged not as a cultural showcase for the black bourgeoisie, but as a sign of racial militancy and social assertiveness among the masses. As Hubert Harrison, one of their intellectual spokesmen, wrote in 1920, "The tenseness of this new situation has been reflected ... in the mental attitude of the Negro people. They have developed new ideas of their own place in the category of races and have evolved new conceptions of their powers and destiny. These ideas have quickened their race-consciousness and they are making new demands on themselves, on their leaders, and on the white people in whose midst they live." The young literary artists who exemplified that tendency were realistic in their imagery of black mass culture. Generally indifferent to what polite society thought of their work, they seemed possessed by a feeling that a stage of history had summoned them to memorialize the lower strata of black social life, to capture and humanize their expressions.

Late in 1922 McKay published his collection *Harlem Shadows*, which "proclaims him one of the finest of modern American poets," wrote James Weldon Johnson, who was then an officer of the NAACP and himself a poet as well as a novelist. This was followed in 1923 by Jean Toomer's *Cane*, "a series of realistic stories of Negro life, interspersed with original lyrics of great beauty." And from there Johnson went on to describe the gathering momentum of the 1920s renaissance in black writing:

> In 1924, Jessie Fauset published *There Is Confusion*, a novel of life among intelligent and fairly well-to-do Northern Negroes. Almost simultaneously came Walter White's *The Fire in the Flint*, a novel that gave a sectional view of life in the South. . . . In this period literary prizes were awarded through *The Crisis*, edited by W. E. B. DuBois and *Opportunity*, edited by Charles S. Johnson. . . . In 1924 and 1925 came volumes of poetry by Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes, followed by novels by Nella Imes [Larsen] and Rudolph Fisher and by books of prose and poetry by a dozen other writers. The leading publishers opened their doors and important magazines opened their pages to these writers—and the Negro "literary revival" was in full swing.

COUNTEE CULLEN BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Full swing indeed. To have been a black writer in the 1920s was to have been "a literary son of God," the white critic V. F. Calverton recalled. It appeared, he said, "as though Negro literature was the most important in the country."

Among the main promoters of that literature (particularly poetry and short fiction) were James Weldon Johnson; Charles S. Johnson, editor of the National Urban League's *Opportunity* magazine; Alain Locke, a professor of philosophy at Howard University; and W. E. B. DuBois, crusading editor of the NAACP's monthly organ *The Crisis*, and author of (among other books) *The Souls of Black Folk*, one of the most influential collections of cultural and political essays published in the first decade of the century. Whatever were the standards by which James Weldon Johnson judged his own writing, he was generally tolerant and admiring of the technical and social ap-

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proaches the younger artists adopted. His eye was democratic and indulgent, rather than doctrinaire. But the same could not be said of DuBois, Locke, or Charles S. Johnson. However supportive they were of the younger writers, they took aesthetic sides and prescribed social approaches.

"We expect of literature, nowadays, to reveal with some measure of faithfulness something of the life of a people; something of those subtle forces which sustain their hopes and joys, stiffens them in sorrow," Charles S. Johnson wrote in *Opportunity* in 1925. In a speech titled "The Criteria of Negro Art," DuBois argued:

> The apostle of beauty . . . becomes the apostle of truth and right, not by choice but by inner and outer compulsion. Free he is but his freedom is ever bounded by truth and justice. . . . Thus all art is propaganda and ever must be, despite the wailing of purists. I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have for writing has been used always for propaganda, for gaining the right of black folk to love and enjoy. I do not care a damn for any art that is not used for propaganda.

Locke's position was not quite so dogmatic, but it clearly indicated what *he* preferred to see in the work of the younger writers. He wrote in 1925:

> Our poets have now stopped speaking for the Negro—they speak as Negroes. Where formerly they spoke to others and tried to interpret, they now speak to their own and try to express. They have stopped posing, being nearer to the attainment of poise.
>
> . . . The artistic problem of the Young Negro has not been so much that of acquiring the outer mastery of form so much as that of achieving an inner mastery of mood and spirit. That accomplished, there has come the happy release from self-consciousness, rhetoric, bombast, and the hampering habit of setting artistic values with primary regard for moral effect.

In the differing requirements they made of literature, DuBois and Locke were reflecting positions they occupied in black America. Although DuBois was conservative and discriminating in personal style, he was a passionate leader of the black protest movement, and he wished to view almost all black creative efforts as potential aids to the cause of racial progress. Locke was not so influenced by considerations of that kind. Mostly an aesthete, he was the best literary critic black American life had yet produced.

The outcome of their contest for the critical leadership of New Negro literature isn't clear. Each had his admirers and detractors among the younger writers; and to some of them it was a matter of great indifference whether or not their work was found pleasing by DuBois or Locke. One of the quarrels that broke out among the renaissance artists, however, reflected indirectly the schools of critical thought represented by the two intellectual giants who were looking over their shoulders. And triggering that dispute was the work of Countee Cullen—his vision of art, his pitch of voice, his conception of the poet's mission.

Of all the young renaissance writers, only Cullen had been raised in Harlem, though signs of it were not abundant in his poetry. Apparently it cannot be ascertained whether his birthplace was Baltimore, Louisville, or New York City. But it is generally agreed that he was born in 1903, that his original family name was Porter, and that he was adopted at an early age by the Rev. Frederick A. Cullen, minister of Salem Methodist Episcopal Church in Harlem. Brought up in a parsonage—and the not-so-strict social surroundings of Harlem—the young Cullen seems to have eschewed the vernacular styles of the street. He attended the predominantly white DeWitt Clinton High School on the middle west side of Manhattan (where James Baldwin, born in 1924, was to be a student). He excelled at DeWitt Clinton, and before his graduation in 1922 he became an associate editor of the school's literary magazine, *The Magpie* (as Baldwin also became in his time). It was in *The Magpie* that Cullen's first notable poem ("Life's Rendezvous") appeared. And in a few of its lines he signified what the prevailing tone and spirit of his later poetry would be:

> I am betrothed to Beauty, scarred
> With suffering though she may be;
> In that she bears pain splendidly,
> Her comeliness may not be marred.

Cullen went on to distinguish himself at New York University and Harvard, and at the Sorbonne as well, where he studied on a Guggenheim Fellowship. In 1925 his professional career was impressively launched with the publication of *Color*, his first book of poems. Reviewing it in *Opportunity*, Locke raved:

> Ladies and gentlemen! A genius! Posterity will laugh at us if we do not proclaim him now. *Color* transcends all the limiting qualifications. . . . It is the work of a Negro poetry writing for the most part out of the intimate emotional experience of race, but the adjective is for the first time made irrelevant, so thoroughly has he poeticized the substance and fused it with the universally known moods of life.

Three years after that glowing reception, Cullen took as his first wife the only daughter of the intellectual aristocrat DuBois. Held at his father's Salem Methodist Church, the wedding (which Du-

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Bois saw as a union between intellect and poetry) was one of the most splendid in the splendid Harlem of the '20s. If Cullen's choice of Yolande DuBois symbolized *his* desire for a union with the cream of black society (a not unlikely desire), then it may also have signified his poor judgment of social possibilities. Perhaps for the success of such a union, much more was required of the groom than a talent for poetry. In any case, his marriage to Yolande collapsed within a few months.

As Cullen made his way through NYU, Harvard, and the Sorbonne, his poems appeared frequently in such black and white publications as *The Crisis, Opportunity, The Messenger, Poetry, Vanity Fair, Survey Graphic, The Bookman, The World Tomorrow, The American Mercury, Harper's,* and *The Century.* In the 1920s he was easily the most widely published of the Harlem poets (including the prolific Langston Hughes). "It seemed that no literary magazine could bear to go to press without a Countee Cullen poem," his first biographer, Blanche Ferguson, has reported.

Cullen died in 1946, some sixteen years after Harlem Renaissance writing began losing its fashionable bloom. By then he had published several collections of his poems (*Color, Copper Sun, The Ballad of the Brown Girl, The Black Christ and Other Poems, The Medea and Other Poems*); one anthology of black poetry (*Caroling Dusk*); and an amateurish novel of Harlem life (*One Way to Heaven*). Just before his death he had selected for publication in one volume the poems by which he wished to be remembered, which later appeared under the title *On These I Stand.* He had written little poetry of any consequence in his last years, though he was only 43 when he died. Perhaps the great bitch goddess had tamed his fires, since no black poet of the 1920s and '30s achieved the popular success that Cullen did. Or perhaps he had simply exhausted his poetic vein, reached the natural end of his productiveness.

Cullen was the most enchanting lyric voice of the Harlem Renaissance, far exceeding Claude McKay (by no means a poor singer himself), both of whom had been shaped by a youthful love for nineteenth-century English lyricism. But McKay's early encounter with that tradition had not discouraged his inclination to strong social and racial statement. He said once that when he read the great Victorian lyricists he could "feel their race, their class, their roots in the soil." And in one of his poems he prayed for "ancient music" to come to his "modern heart" and make him "the worthy singer of my world and race."

Cullen did not, could not, avoid entirely the question of race. But his view of himself as a poet did not permit him to make that question his main subject. Where McKay prayed to be a singer of his "world and race," Cullen aspired to sing more for "world" than for "race." To sing too much for the latter was, in his view, a form of social crusading, corrupting to the primary or essential function of poetry—or art, generally. Only occasionally was the sound of racial protest heard strongly in his work, as in his long poems "The Black Christ" and "The Shroud of Color," or in the much shorter "From the Dark Tower":

> We shall not always plant while others reap
> The golden increment of bursting fruit,
> Not always countenance, abject and mute,
> That lesser men should hold their brothers cheap;
> . . . . . .
> The night whose sable breast relieves the stark,
> White stars is no less lovely being dark,
> And there are buds that cannot bloom at all
> In light, but crumple, piteous, and fall;
> So in the dark we hide the heart that bleeds,
> And wait, and tend our agonizing seeds.

Usually, Cullen engaged the race problem obliquely—at times with deft jabs and glancing blows, as in "For a Lady I Know":

> She even thinks that up in heaven
> Her class lies late and snores
> While poor black cherubs rise at seven
> To do celestial chores.

At times with understated amusement, as in "Incident":

> Once riding in old Baltimore,
> Heart-filled, head-filled with glee
> I saw a Baltimorean
> Keep looking straight at me.
>
> Now I was eight and very small,
> And he was no whit bigger,
> And so I smiled, but he poked
> His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."
>
> I saw the whole of Baltimore
> From May until December;
> Of all the things that happened there
> That's all that I remember.

At other times with poignant irony, as in "Yet Do I Marvel":

> I doubt not God is good, well-meaning, kind,
> And did He stoop to quibble could tell why
> The little buried mole continues blind,
> Why flesh that mirrors Him must some day die,
> . . . . . .
> Inscrutable His ways are, and immune
> To catechism by a mind too strewn
> With petty cares to slightly understand
> What awful brain compels His awful hand.
> Yet do I marvel at this curious thing:
> To make a poet black, and bid him sing!

The larger portion of Cullen's poems (including some that made use of racial detail) were wry or plaintive commentaries on general experience: love, death, grief, yearning, nature, the passing of the seasons—and, of course, "beauty," to which he was "betrothed." He was among the three or four most quoted poets in America; for, as Calverton observed in 1929, Cullen wrote "with an infectious beauty of rhythm."

If I am going to be a poet at all," he said in 1924:

> I am going to be POET and not NEGRO POET. That is what has hindered the development of artists among us. Their one note has been the concern with their race. That is all very well, none of us can get away from it. I cannot at times. . . . But what I mean is this: I shall not write of Negro subjects for the purpose of propaganda. That is not what a poet is concerned with.

In a number of other statements, Cullen acknowledged that he was "not at all a democratic person," that he believed "in the aristocracy of the soul." He regarded himself as "a rank conservative, loving the measured line and skillful / rhyme." He wished any merit in his work to be seen as flowing "from it solely as a poem—with no racial consideration to bolster it up." And he proclaimed his literary idols to be Edna St. Vincent Millay and John Keats, in whose memory he wrote "To John Keats, Poet. At Springtime,"

> I cannot hold my peace John Keats;
> There never was a spring like this;
> It is an echo, that repeats
> My last year's song and next year's bliss.
> I know, in spite of all men say
> Of Beauty, you have felt her most.
> Yea, even in your grave her way
> Is laid. Poor, troubled, lyric ghost,
> Spring never was so fair and dear
> As Beauty makes her seem this year.

To a number of Cullen's ambivalent colleagues in the Negro renaissance movement, it was indeed a curious thing that a black-born poet could so have learned to sing. Not even the race-conscious novelist Wallace Thurman could help praising Cullen's "extraordinary ear for music," his "extensive and dexterous knowledge of words and their values," his "enviable understanding of conventional poetic forms." But Thurman, who seldom tossed a bouquet that wasn't followed by a brickbat, went on to criticize Cullen for being "too steeped in tradition, too influenced mentally by certain conventions and taboos." Cullen, he added, was a bourgeois poet who "never will seek the so-called lower elements of Negro life for his poetic rhythms and material."

This quarrel was an echo, however

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faint, of the differing aesthetic programs favored by DuBois and Locke. Hughes (whose free conversational rhythms captured the moods of jazz and the "so-called lower elements" of Harlem life) also weighed in against Cullen's poetics. It was Cullen he had in mind in 1926 when he wrote:

> One of the most promising of the young Negro poets said to me once, "I want to be a poet—not a Negro poet"; meaning subconsciously, "I would like to be a white poet"; meaning behind that, "I would like to be white." And I was very sorry the young man said that, for no great poet has ever been afraid of being himself. And I doubted then that, with his desire to run away spiritually from his race, this boy would ever be a great poet.

Whether or not Hughes was correct in his psychoanalysis of Cullen, it would appear that the "boy" did gain recognition as a great poet. According to Early, an essayist and a professor of literature at Washington University in St. Louis, "By the late 1920s only Edna St. Vincent Millay surpassed him . . . in critical press and attention." And in 1926 DuBois, despite his preference for propaganda in art, gladly shared this anecdote with one of his black audiences: "A professor at the University of Chicago read to a class . . . a passage of poetry, and asked them to guess the author. They guessed a goodly company from Shelley and Robert Browning down to Tennyson and Masefield. The author was Countee Cullen."

But DuBois may not have been motivated wholly by compliment. With his convictions about propaganda, he may have been pointing to an absurdity in Cullen's position—a black American poet whose voice could not be differentiated from those of the great English Victorians. Didn't a great poet require an individual voice, an unmistakable signature? Still, if Cullen wasn't a great poet, he was a very good and gifted one, a natural lyricist of undeniable appeal. He would not have been displeased by the story that DuBois told about him. After all, one of his highest aspirations was to be recognized as a "poet," not as a "Negro poet."

Cullen's "To Certain Critics" (mostly black no doubt) was a defiant defense of his approach to the writing of poetry:

> *Then call me traitor if you must,*
> Shout treason and default!
> Say I betray a sacred trust
> Aching beyond this vault.
> I'll bear your censure as your praise
> For never shall the clan
> Confine my singing to its ways
> Beyond the ways of men.

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No racial option narrows grief,
Pain is no patriot,
And sorrow plaits its dismal leaf
For all as lief as not.
With blind sheep groping every hill,
Searching an oriflamme,
How shall the shepherd heart then trill
To only the darker lamb?

In *My Soul's High Song*, Early has brought together almost all of Cullen's published work, including his occasional essays and his stilted satirical novel *One Way to Heaven*. It is the poetry, of course, that most distinguishes this weighty collection; and its publication deserves to be rewarded with a renewal of interest in one of the purest lyric voices that American poetry produced in the first half of this century. Early's introduction, supported richly by historical footnotes, may be the best study of Cullen and his work that has yet appeared. It qualifies him to undertake a full-length work, perhaps an addition to the list of definitive biographies (Arnold Rampersad's *Langston Hughes*, Robert Hemenway's *Zora Neale Hurston*, Wayne Cooper's *Claude McKay*) that leading lights of the Harlem Renaissance have inspired so far.

There are a few questions in Early's introduction that only a longer work could adequately explain. He writes, for instance, that "more than any other presence of the time, including Langston Hughes, Cullen defined his age, and in that sense, dominated it as much as a man of Cullen's temperament could dominate anything. Alas what he defined was not the triumphs of being black and not even its anguish, but the conundrum of blackness." This clearly isn't a thesis with which Cullen's more racially engaged literary contemporaries would have agreed. Neither is it one that this reader finds convincing. Cullen's mastery of the traditional lyric form was indeed remarkable, unique among the black poets of his generation. And he did attract a wider interracial attention to "Negro poetry" (much as he disliked the term) than any other writer of the Harlem Renaissance period. Yet none of those distinctions is sufficient to qualify him as the defining and dominating presence of his age—or of the black experience of his age.

Harlem, where Cullen lived in the 1920s and beyond, was the paradigmatic black urban community of his time. Beneath the surface of its gaiety, it was the principal stage on which the dramas of black aspiration, self-discovery, and self-assertion were being enacted. Although Cullen's work was not without racial themes (however hard he may have tried to suppress them), it reflected no great absorption with the social styles, predicaments, and ambitions of those who formed the majority in the black population. This is surely not meant to suggest that as a black poet Cullen was obliged to limit his attention to the urgent affairs of skin color; he was as entitled as all artists are to follow the dictates of his imagination. But it is meant to suggest that an aesthete of his character—averse to direct social and racial confrontation in his work; reluctant to identify it too closely with black consciousness; feeling that such had no proper place in the life of poetry; even declining to regard himself as a "Negro poet"—a writer so aloof from the pressing issues and concerns of his people can scarcely have been the dominant and defining racial influence of his age.

Early stakes that claim on his belief that Cullen defined the conundrum of blackness. He doesn't explain clearly what he means by that. He cannot be alluding to what he describes as Cullen's difficulty in reconciling his blackness with his Christianity, for that implies a dilemma of personal or religious faith—whereas the conundrum of blackness suggests a shared social bewilderment, a perplexity of the black minority position within a white-dominated culture. What Early seems to be referring to, then, is Cullen's ironic "Yet Do I Marvel," with its much-quoted closing couplet: "Yet do I marvel at this curious thing: / To make a poet black and bid him sing."

Yet Cullen's lines, poignant though they may be, are not a definition but a statement or restatement of an ancient conundrum in American life. Its definition (a term related to original formulation and insight) predated the age of Cullen. The turn-of-the-century black poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (some of whose rhythms echo in Cullen's) was surely meditating upon the conundrum of blackness when he wrote not only of "why the caged bird beats its wings" but also of why it "sings." And DuBois had struck a not dissimilar note in his *The Souls of Black Folk*, which first appeared in 1903: "One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."

Still, if Cullen wasn't the first writer of color to identify the conundrum of blackness in American culture, he was certainly an outstanding example of it: a poet who desired to sing as he or his imagination pleased, uninhibited by the demanding subject matter of blackness. That could be risked, that could be done, but not to unanimous applause. "Cullen, with his smooth sounds and traditional idiom, seemed very much a poet," the critic Stephen Bronz came to say. But Bronz went on, "He never really found himself as a poet," for he was so "determined not to be regarded as specifically a Negro poet" that he "tried to escape a confrontation with the realities that his times and race imposed upon him." In the late 1920s Cullen, while visiting with a white admirer of his poetry, was suddenly turned upon: Why all this fascination with John Keats, why so many allusions to Endymion and Lancelot and Jupiter? As he was then "drinking the Madame's tea," he withheld the answer that might have displeased his hostess. But while pondering her questions on his way home, he said this to himself: "Must we, willy-nilly, be forced into writing of nothing but the atavistic urges, the

Dead Christ

There seems no reason he should've died. His hands
are pierced by holes too tidy to have held,
untorn, hard muscles as they writhed on spikes.
And on the pink, scrubbed bottom of each foot
a bee-stung lip pouts daintily.
No reason he should die—and yet, and yet
Christ's eyes are swollen with it, his mouth
hangs slack with it—his belly taut with it,
his long hair lank with it;
and underneath the clinging funeral cloth,
his manhood's huge and useless with it: Death.

One blood-drop trickles toward his wrist. Somehow
the grieving women missed it when they bathed,
today, the empty corpse. Most Christs return.
But this one's flesh. He isn't coming back.

ANDREW HUDGINS

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more savage and none too beautiful aspects of our lives? May we not chant a hymn to the Sun God if we will create a bit of fantasy in which not a spiritual or a blues appears . . . in short do, write, create, what we will, our only concern being that we will do it well and with all the power in us?"

The problem that Cullen described, a problem of all black writers who shared his philosophy of art, was essentially the problem of artistic or cultural freedom—how to adjudicate the claims of personal imagination against the claims of racial community and political engagement. Cullen resolved those claims on the side of what was most animating to him, his imagination of himself as an artist, even if the melodies he sang were not so invigorating to the mass struggle for social change and racial progress.

JERVIS ANDERSON, the author of *This Was Harlem, 1900-1950* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), is at work on a biography of Bayard Rustin.

The Two Homers

BY DOUGLASS PARKER

The Iliad
translated by Robert Fagles
introduction and notes by Bernard Knox

(Viking Penguin, 683 pp., $35)

The Odyssey
translated by Allen Mandelbaum

(University of California Press, 526 pp., $35)

The ghost of Homer, debriefed on the Blessed Isles about A.D. 160, supplied the junketing Lucian with some eagerly awaited information.

"Is your name really Homer?"

"No, Tigranês.

"Where were you born? Chios? Smyrna? Colophon?"

"No, Babylon."

Hardly sterling talk-show technique. And the performance turned sorry when, poised for the Big Question, the interviewer muffed his chance.

"Did Homer/Tigranês write the *Odyssey* before the *Iliad*?"

"No."

What Lucian should have asked, of course, was, "Did Homer/Tigranês write both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*?" But he thought he knew the answer, and got ahead of the interviewee. And so we'll never know, never have more comfort than an inference from the sloppy journalism of a completely unreliable source.

This little epiphany is prompted by the trimester just past, which saw the birth of two major English translations of the major epics of Greek antiquity. The innocent seeker after enlightenment who spends $70 will become an intertextualist willy-nilly, and may well wonder at the question that Lucian failed to ask: "Which is Homer?" Both Robert Fagles's *Iliad* and Allen Mandelbaum's *Odyssey* bear the name, but there the resemblance stops. They are literally as different as black is from white. More accurately, as black is from bone.

Judged first by their covers, the physical volumes, remarkably consistent with their contents, mark what each aims at being. Viking Penguin's imposing *Iliad*: 9½ inches by 6¾ inches by 2 inches; weight, about two pounds. Outside, black dust jacket over black cloth; on front, title in large gold caps, framing beautiful photo of bronze 600 B.C. warrior now in Berlin; outside back, a raft of prestigious blurbs—poets, scholars, Yale, Harvard, Oxford, Berkeley; backflap, biographies. Inside, endpapers with traditional warrior motifs, type 10 point Meridian, no illustrations but small warrior-bust motif atop each book. Contents exclusive of poems: Fagles's Translator's Preface, four pages; Knox's Introduction, sixty-five pages; three double-page maps: Greece N, Greece S, zoom out for Greece/Asia Minor, with inset of Troad. At end, genealogical table, list of variants, fifty-two items of bibliography, and a forty-two-page Pronouncing Glossary, keyed by numbered line of the translation. Emblematic touch: ribbon bookmark.

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California's sumptuous *Odyssey*: 11⅜ inches by 7¾ inches by 1½ inches; weight, four pounds. Outside, bone dust jacket over red cloth; on front, title in red swash calligraphy; outside back, quote from Book IX and one prestigious blurb from Berkeley; backflap, list of Mandelbaum's oeuvre, with blurbs. Inside, no endpapers, type 12 point (!) Bembo, cover engraving repeated, stamp-size, to head each book. Contents exclusive of poems: no essay, no notes, at end Translator's Remarks six pages; Glossary, twenty pages, keyed by page. Distributed through book, twelve full-page engravings by Romans. Emblematic touch: huge margins.

State-of-the-art *Art.* Destination: coffee table.

These fundamental veers in style are more than marketing decisions, to be leveled away when the smallest paperback appears and drummers (if they have them anymore) go flogging the epics to Western Civ courses (if they have *them* anymore). The poems within these books are just as different as their physical shells, and they can produce a marked intellectual strabismus in the reader of both. To see this, take a section where the principle of oral parsimony in the Greek decreed the use of the identical passage in both epics.

In *Iliad* 24, Priam and his herald are hosted by the enemy:

> [Achilles] briskly told his . . . serving-women
> to make beds in the porch's shelter, to lay down
> some heavy purple throws for the beds themselves
> and over them spread blankets and thick woolly robes,
> a warm covering laid on top. Torches held in hand,
> they went from the hall. . . .
>
> [*Iliad* 24.643-47]

So Fagles: lines of six beats, and swollen at that, enjambing to solder one line to the next where the Greek does the same; adjectives piled like the comforters they describe. The subtext is: let nothing escape.

In *Odyssey* 4, Telemachus is received at Sparta:

> [Helen] told her maids
> to set out beds beneath the portico,
> to cover them with handsome crimson rugs,
> and top these, too, with blankets and soft fleece.
> The maids, each with a torch in hand, went off. . . .
>
> [*Odyssey* 4.296-300]

So Mandelbaum: iambic fives, pared to the bone, in meter and diction. Five lines and forty-three syllables where Fagles uses six and fifty-eight. Endstopping in spite of the Greek. The subtext is: keep it fastidious.

Admittedly, these are primarily functional formulas from the Homeric Greek database; minor, if ever verses were. A frequent occurrence is typed and set, encapsulated for easy employment, its primary virtues those of neatness and dispatch. These versions are by no means sufficient samples for assaying and assessing the lengthy translations, but they do show the problem, and something about the place to start.

The place to start is The Line. The line is primarily what the verse translator of Homer (and every ancient epic) has to offer. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and *Argonautica* and *Aeneid* and all the rest are cast in the dactylic hexameter, from thirteen to seventeen syllables long, capable of what seems infinite variation within that confined compass. The translator must find an analogue for this, a medium within which to do the work, a line that can bear up what he has to say without turning it to mush. The importance of the rest—diction, stance, tone—can hardly be overestimated, but the line comes first.

But why the line at all? Why not play it as it lays, translate the formulaic Greek of a given segment into English of some rhythm and then move on? Because, as Bernard Knox makes quite clear in his marvelous introduction to the *Iliad*, the formulas were the stock out of which an oral poet improvised. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* we have, though written down, managed somehow to reproduce the feeling of an authentic session, the stimulus-response, the risk. The constraints of the line are such that even a section that somehow declares its hoariness appears as a minor miracle, coined in a moment in an impossibly difficult measure to meet a sudden demand.

The Homeric translator deliberately imposes form on himself, form analogous to the original, and then wrestles with it. What he must do, while he tells the story, is reproduce the constraints and replicate the risk, recapitulate the struggle and the excitement. Pose his own danger and surmount it. This is certainly the way it has been since Richmond Lattimore ushered in the modern age of classical translation, and made a New Thing in the world, with his *Iliad* forty years ago. By example and by precept, he established the mores of the undertaking: that the translator, say, must be both scholar and poet, and also, it seems, American.

On looking back, however, Lattimore's greatest contribution to the ongoing dialectic of Greek original and English version was his line, the loosely accented, six-stress analogue with which he represented Homer's dactyls:

> Bellerophontes went to Lykia in the blameless convoy
> of the gods; when he came to the running stream of Xanthos, and Lykia,
> the lord of wide Lykia tendered him full-hearted honour.
> Nine days he entertained him with sacrifice of nine oxen,
> but afterwards when the rose fingers of the tenth dawn showed, then
> he began to question him, and asked to be shown the symbols,
> whatever he might be carrying from his son-in-law, Proitos.
> Then after he had been given his son-in-law's wicked symbols
> first he sent him away with orders to kill the Chimaira
> none might approach; a thing of immortal make, not human,
> lion-fronted and snake behind, a goat in the middle,
> and snorting out the breath of the terrible flame of bright fire.
>
> [*Iliad* 6.171-82]

Wonderful, the way it broke away from the incessant clenches of couplets, the padding produced by fourteeners, the bigfoot dactyloid thump of *Evangeline* ("This is the *forest* pri*me*val. The *mur*muring *pines* and the *hem*locks . . ."). And wonderful, too, its by-the-line relation to Homer. Look up *Iliad* 2.557 in Lattimore, and there are the Salaminians just where they are in the Greek, patiently waiting to cause an international incident. And throughout, the recurrent formulas are there for all to see. They are not rationalized, not palliated. It's really no wonder that many classicists, back in 1951, thought that the unbelievable had happened. We had a transpicuous medium, a Homer in English: we could declare to the Greekless that that was what it was all about. It had the same shape, the same feel, and all the words were there.

What we didn't realize for almost a decade was how deep this art's necessary compromise—first be utterly faithful, then as good as you can—ran. It was an act of self-immolation, a purposeful cultivation of distance, a subtle padding to fit the original's line scheme, which resulted in the Greek's determining the micropoetics of the English, and ultimately in an incantatory sameness. On his own Lattimore was a considerable poet, with staggering technical equipment. But he was all under wraps here, spillikined out to make the English only as palatable as is consonant with closeness to the Greek. He might have kept telling himself not to commit personality: "Be thou dull." And, at least to some, dull he became. Faithful incan-

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tation was not enough. However reverent, it all sounded the same. And transparency wasn't enough, either, for those days of auteurism. Who, ultimately, was *there*? Anyone at all?

Robert Fitzgerald answered this question in 1961, with his *Odyssey*. First, away with the Lattimore Line. The six-beat succeeds in English with extreme difficulty; it really only works with carefully modulated and varied breaks. Our ears aren't trained for alexandrines, nor for the way their twelve syllables, given the light French stress, collapse into four beats. There's also a temptation to jam this line fuller, to pile up light syllables and bootleg in heavy ones, until the result can have eighteen syllables and counting. Even done with skill, it's the diplodocus of English verse, the double-beam ready to sag in the middle, needing a second brain at about beat four. Shucking the by-the-line equivalence, Fitzgerald went back to an iambic five, quite tight, that could be spoken. He made, as they say, a poem in its own right.

In the mid-1970s I was in a group that taped the *Iliad* for radio, all 15,693 lines or twenty-three hours of it. Lattimore's, so supple on the page, proved stolid out loud, turning even skilled readers into struggling Gregorians. But Fitzgerald's *Iliad*, published in 1974, was a revelation: there were voices there, an Achilles, a Thersites, a Priam, above all a narrator, speeches in such language as men do use. And the straight iambic line: deft and light, it both restructured the speech and counterpointed it, supplying a rhetoric that a speaker could use. Priam to Achilles (*Iliad* 24.493-502):

> Noble sons
> I fathered here, but scarce one man is left me.
> Fifty I had when the Akhaians came,
> Nineteen out of a single belly, others
> Born of attendant women. Most are gone.
> Raging Ares cut their knees from under them.
> And he who stood alone among them all,
> their champion, and Troy's, ten days ago
> you killed him, fighting for his land, my prince,
> Hektor.
> It is for him that I have come
> among these ships, to beg him back from you,
> and I bring ransom without stint.

It's a guide for the voice, a pointed script. To make it work, Fitzgerald consciously sacrificed distinctive characteristics of Homer. In fact, he cut. Did the formulaic epithet get in the way of his swiftness? Then good-bye to "long-suffering shining" Odysseus and to "swift-footed" Achilles. Could he see a quicker way than the original phrase? He took it. And elsewhere the same; he was building no mausoleum.

HOMER BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Which, with a good many omissions, is where we have arrived, forty years after Lattimore, thirty years after Fitzgerald, our major Homeric translations. Looked at in the worst possible way, the choice is between ponderous faithfulness and eloquent scanting. Yet both aims were right, and both are worth following again, which may explain why we have just been presented with the marvel of a new *Iliad* and a new *Odyssey*, and why they resemble each other not in the slightest. Fagles is a Lattimorean, Mandelbaum is a Fitzgeraldite.

The glory—and sometimes the shame—of Fagles's other translations has been, well, fullness. Not content with getting everything in, he would develop implications, tease out backgrounds, sometimes translate himself translating. His every inclination in the *Iliad* must have been to free Lattimore's line and use it to make up for Fitzgerald's cutting. To get the right feeling, Fagles develops, fills out—let's face it, he pads. Justified padding, but unmistakable: his equivalent for the hexameter is a basic six-beat line, pulling back to five or swelling to seven. Here from the Final Combat, *Iliad* 22.188-99, is a simile and its interaction, Fagles at his very best:

> And swift Achilles kept on coursing Hector,
> nonstop
> as a hound in the mountains starts a fawn from its lair,
> hunting him down the gorges, down the narrow glens
> and the fawn goes to ground, hiding deep in brush
> but the hound comes racing fast, nosing him out
> until he lands his kill. So Hector could never throw
> Achilles off his trail, the swift racer Achilles—
> time and again he'd make a dash for the Dardan Gates,
> trying to rush beneath the rock-built ramparts, hoping
> men on the heights might save him, somehow, raining spears
> but time and again Achilles would intercept him quickly,
> heading him off, forcing him out across the plain
> and always sprinting along the city side himself—
> endless as in a dream. . . .

Part of the excellence of this passage comes from the cross-registry of different dictions. When before did one ever see the verb "course" and the adverb "nonstop" in the same space? But the real wonder is the persistence, or sweep, or surge, or override. Fagles, like the hound/Achilles, will not give up, will not allow the reader/fawn/Hector to stop at line-end and catch his breath. Still, what really makes it work lies deeper: in the inner poetic of Fagles's line itself. The ex-

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cellences of the six-beat line are the articulation of the diplodocus, the interplay of the sections: the line beginning "and swift Achilles" 2-2-1-1; "hunting him down" 3-3, subdivided into 1-2-3 ("narrow" is, from the point of view of strict lexicality, padding, but see how it picks the sound of "down" and more or less reverses it).

It is by no means a by-the-line trot. Pick a line, any line: "trying to rush beneath the rock-built ramparts, hoping . . ." This is crafted from words spread over three lines of Greek:

hossaki d'*hormêseie* pulaôn Dardanianôn
antion *aïxasthai eüdmêtous hupo purgous*
ei pôs hoi kathuperthen alalkoien beleëssi

Or, clumsily:

and as-often-as *he-would-hurry / try* gates-Dardanian-
against *to-rush wellbuilt towards-and-under towers,*
whether somehow him from-above they-might protect with-spears

The "try" comes from the upmost line, subdividing the meanings of *hormêseie* and taking the second (he's used the first, "dash," in the line before); the first two words of the last line imply "wondering" or "to see." The rough source is now:

he-would-try / to hurry underneath
wellbuilt towers / city walls /
ramparts, whether somehow

which might become English with a forest of alternatives something like this:

he'd try to hurry / speed / flash / rush under / beneath well-built
towers / citywalls / ramparts in order to find out if

The problem is to produce, from that mess, a six-beat line that is both a unified whole and integral part, that doesn't slow the passage down. The solution comes first from the choice of the participles "trying" and "hoping" to frame the line, twin towers at the ends. Then "ramparts" and "rush" choose each other for the alliteration, leaving the problem of "well-built," a standard epithet for stone structures. At this stage you have: "trying to rush beneath well-built ramparts, hoping." But "beneath well-built ramparts" sounds oracular and, worse, general. These are not just any ramparts, they're the ramparts of Troy. Supply the article, which Homeric Greek doesn't have; then you can get away from the two stresses coming together after "beneath." And while you're at it, particularize "well-built" and up the alliteration. And so, finally:

trying to rush beneath the rock-built ramparts, hoping

The line is alive, self-contained, the *r*-sequence flanked by twin participles, the whole seeming to resolve into 2-2-2: "trying to rush / between the rock / built ramparts hoping"—except that the language won't let it happen. Note how you go: "rush" won't stop; rush what? rush where? Then "beneath the rock," another 2, until one realizes what "rock-built" does, grommeting the line together with its hyphen, or voice-suspension, forcing it into something like 5-1, with the last beat, "hoping," spurring the chase on to the next line. This is true craft. It doesn't shriek, but adds to the general opulence, then modestly waits, perhaps forever, to be unpacked.

And the overall passage, like the rest of this *Iliad*, has tremendous eloquence and range, bought at the noted price, or expense: Fagles's fullness, his determination to Get It All In, to develop the implications of words in their context. His art is the whole sack, essentially copious, and here the large line, the insistence on keeping the six beats while building this unbroken swell, both dictates and serves various tactics of expansion. Specificity, for example, where the Greek is general: "until he lands his kill" for "until he finds him." Adding: "endless" to "as in a dream." Repeating: "So Hector could never throw Achilles off his trail, the swift racer Achilles" for "So Hector didn't escape swiftfoot Peleion." The six-beat lines are crammed, and still pick up two on the Greek. But the process is justified. The rise works out. This is an *Iliad*-strategy, primed for grandeur. Fagles's typical virtue and typical vice are the basis of the achievement, and the result is a glory that can encompass that shuddering last month of the war.

Mandelbaum's *Odyssey* has a dandy's line, a brummel of a verse that prances, skirting arabesques that in the *Iliad* would seem indecorous. When he turns it on full force, gussied and ornamented, it can blow you away. So the proem to Book 1:

Muse, tell me of the man of many wiles,
the man who wandered many paths of exile,
after he sacked Troy's sacred citadel.
He saw the cities—mapped the minds—of many;
and on the sea, his spirit suffered every
adversity—to keep his life intact,
to bring his comrades back. In that last task,
his will was firm and fast, and yet he failed:
he could not save his comrades. Fools, they foiled
themselves: they ate the oxen of the Sun,
the herd of Hélios Hypérion:
the lord of light requited their transgression—
he took away the day of their return.
Muse, tell us of these matters. Daughter of Zeus,
My starting point is any point you choose.
[*Odyssey* 1.1-10]

The off-rhyme twists here dazzle: the consonances "wiles/exile/citadel" and "failed/foiled," the assonances "many/every" and "intact/task," the muted straight-rhyme sequence "Sun/Hyperion/transgression" beaching in the slanted "return," the section slammed together by the self-confidence that can employ "Zeus/choose" with a straight face and get away with it. The meter is a skillful but straight iambic five.

It's Mandelbaum's preserve. He must have published, with Virgil and Dante and now the *Odyssey*, more English "iambic pentameters" than anyone alive. It is here preserved from soporificity by all sorts of inside and outside play. Consonance and alliteration: "sacked the sacred citadel." Repetition and variation: "man of many wiles, / the man who wandered many paths." Extended alliteration: "his will was firm and fast, but yet he failed:/he could not save his comrades. Fools, they foiled . . ." Steady consonance: "back. In that last task." Overall, so much alliteration you think of Pound's first Canto . . . but no. The alliteration makes Pound's look scanty, and the meter is too, well, regular. It is by no means dull, though. The rhythm, never roughened, still keeps the pounding tuh-*dum* at bay. Look at the reversed accent in "Muse, tell"; the heavy monosyllables in the Poundian homage "*In that last task.*" What makes it viable, however, is the language, the basic urge toward simplicity of diction.

Still, there's enough flash and filigree lurking here to bother the starting reader, who may well be torn between admiration of Mandelbaum's entrechats and a real apprehension about *les torts de la rime*. In his own poetry, especially in *The Savantasse of Montparnasse*, which appeared in 1987, Mandelbaum is clearly out to amaze, with a sort of *baroco-quillage* that abounds in mad lexical beasts, in "parapegms" and "nenuphars," in wild off-rhyming, especially in iambic fours, where a stanza may start with the rhyme scheme "Lebouis/l'Ouest/cul-de-sac/passed/East/that," and rush on past end in the arresting sentence:

Denied, deprived, his compass fashed
and feized, desseized and bilked, bereft
of all but North and South, he sat
upon The-Ground. . . .

Out of context, this is unfair, but it can sum up a worry: Are we going to have a rhymed Homer? And if we do, will it be cute?

No worry, really. The rhymes, full-, slant-, and off-slant, are there, but they are accompanied by a tact that can conceal them. There hasn't been as much endline assonance since Archibald MacLeish's *Conquistador*, that sorry monu-

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ment, but it doesn't intrude. Some reviewers haven't noticed it at all, and it recedes into the background as one goes through to the end.

For the "burrows," as Mandelbaum calls the details, the basic level of translation, go to a less-gussied section, the Cave of the Nymphs on Ithaca::

> At harbor head, there stands an olive tree
> with slender leaves; nearby there lies a cave
> that's dark and gracious, sacred to the
> nymphs
> called Naiads. In that cave are mixing bowls
> and amphoras of stone; there bees store
> honey.
> There, too, long looms of rock allow the
> nymphs
> to weave their cloth that glows like purple
> seas,
> enchantingly. And never-failing streams
> flow through that cave, which has two
> entryways:
> the first lies north, and through that
> entrance men
> descend; the other, facing south, is meant
> to serve the gods—no mortals enter there;
> it is the path of those who know no death.
> [*Odyssey* 13.102-12]

Out of this take the sequence:

> There, too, long looms of rock allow the
> nymphs
> to weave their cloth that glows like purple
> seas,
> enchantingly.

The Greek:

> en d'histoi litheoi perimêkeës, entha te
> numphai
> phare' huphainousin haliporphura,
> thauma idesthai.

The literal:

> within looms, stone, huge, [t]here, too,
> nymphs
> webs/cloth weave, sea-purple, wonder to
> see

The vanilla of simple description? Maybe, but French vanilla. Compare the English. This is put into New High Mandelbaum: the *histoi perimêkeës*, the huge looms, become part of a sound directive that engenders a verb. Not only are they "long," but they "allow," and the L sound is picked up in the second line in combination: unvoiced "cloth," voiced "glows" growing out of the sheen of the sea-purple, which achieves its own magic in the use of a plural: "like purple seas," picking up the S in "nymphs" and pointing to the streams at the next line-end (and the entry*ways* in the line after that). We get a short course in the possible sounds of O: "long, looms, rock, allow, cloth, glows." The enjambment, the run-on, is kept after "nymphs," and another, a forecast of Virgilian technique, is added when the Greek *thauma idesthai* suffers a sea change into the postponed "enchantingly" dripping seductively into

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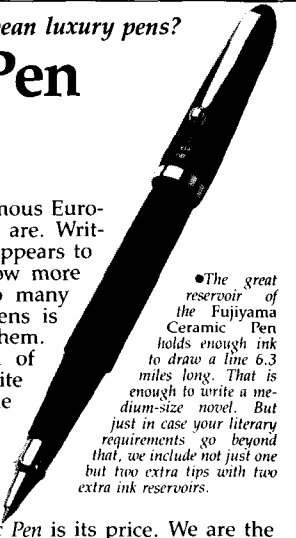

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the line beyond. Supple, subdued elegance: a good description of the *Odyssey* itself.

Each translator, then, Fagles and Mandelbaum, in making each his Line, has put himself on the line. In each case, the risks are all there, caused by the translators' insistence upon their own fundamental poetic natures and practices. Each surmounts his particular vice. Fagles's potential garrulity is the source of a nobility and a sweep hitherto unknown in English *Iliads*. Mandelbaum's potential glitz produces the most sophisticated English *Odyssey* yet seen. One speaks for the trans-Atlantic classical establishment, the other for the beautiful people. Both replicate the risk and win.

Which brings us back to the question Lucian should have asked.

"Which is Homer?"

"Both."

"*Both?*"

"Both."

DOUGLASS PARKER is professor of classics at the University of Texas, Austin. He has translated plays by Aristophanes, Terence, and Seneca, and is working on a translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Modernism's Child

BY WILFRID MELLERS

A Ravel Reader: Correspondence, Articles, Interviews edited by Arbie Orenstein

(Columbia University Press, 653 pp., $49)

A documentary collation of letters, lectures, interviews, and recorded opinions is an accolade usually awarded to people who have changed history. There have been "readers" for the likes of Monteverdi, Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner. In that company, surely, Maurice Ravel is not a major composer; and it cannot be said that *A Ravel Reader* adds much to the sum of human knowledge or the understanding of Ravel's music. From his letters, an amiable personality comes across, but he is never really self-revelatory.

Nor was Ravel a "thinker" concerned with general ideas; his comments on the musical scene (he seldom ventured outside it) were discreet, sometimes charming, hardly thought-provoking. And yet, if he was a secretive man who did not wear his heart on his sleeve, heart, rather than head, was his essence. To appreciate it one needs not documents, but acute ears and a heart as open as his was veiled. There are few composers more capable of inspiring devotion at levels beyond, or perhaps below, rational understanding. I have been in love with Ravel—well, with his music—for more than half a century. It may be of some interest to inquire what such a love might signify.

The history books usually bracket Ravel with Debussy. They do not suggest that he rivaled Debussy as a figure of historical importance; but Ravel shared with his friend and colleague a hypersubtle sensibility and may even be construed as a fin de siècle Parisian dandy. Even so, Ravel's differences from Debussy matter more than his similarities to him, for although both young men, as students, outraged their professors by their iconoclasm, Ravel was by instinct a classicist. If he admired early Romantic composers like Weber (for his meticulously evoked fairylands) and Chopin (for his harmonically sensuous elegance) and Schumann (for his Pierrot-like nostalgia and childlike heart), his supreme god was Mozart.

Among his senior contemporaries, he respected Saint-Saëns, conservative academician and hedonistic *petit seigneur*, whom he bracketed with his revered Mozart as a model for the writing of piano concertos, while admitting that the Frenchman was "*plus facile.*" Ravel loved as well as respected his teacher Fauré, paying tribute to the romanticism within his classicism in pointing out that in Fauré's aristocratic art "structure is never deliberate but spontaneous, not the end but the supple means." Although he admired Debussy's original genius just this side of idolatry, he remarked, in an interview published in *The Musical Digest* in 1928, that "the one who made a more profound impact on me than Debussy was Chabrier, and the latest to move me was Erik Satie: *voilà un vrai musicien.*" This is not surprising. Chabrier's flirtings with Wagnerism did not disguise his roots in, and love of, French *opéra bouffe* and the heady delights of Parisian *café-concert*; and Satie, for all his weirdly disembodied chromatics in his early Rosicrucian pieces, worked in a café-bar, and created a chastely linear, sometimes anti-Debussyan music based on the rhythms of the dance, and even, to a degree ironically, on those of the circus. Though Ravel's early music shares Satie's fascination with Wagnerian higher chromatic discords, it resembles him also in a reluctance to isolate harmony from line, progression, and the bases of tonality.

Ravel's textures are not, like Debussy's, fluid, nor are his forms amorphous. From the beginning his music, precise in its artifice, was dominated by quasi-vocal melody and by corporeal rhythm. His first success, the *Habanera* of 1895, written for piano duet but arranged in many forms, boasts a haunting, typically Ravellian tune; and it is hardly extravagant to say that no typical Debussy tune exists. The *Habanera* is also, of course, a seductively Spanish dance in dotted rhythm. The even more celebrated *Pavane pour une Infante Défunte* of 1899 is, in piano solo or orchestral form, also a dance, a more aristocratically ceremonial one, probably from Renaissance Spain, and its modal tune is so insidious that it may be "recognized" by people who are unaware of Ravel's existence.

The Spanish connection in these two early pieces is of some interest. In an interview with André Revész in 1924, Ravel retrospectively remarked: "My parents met in Madrid. My father was a railroad engineer of French nationality, and my mother was a Basque from Saint-Jean-de-Luz, but probably of Spanish origin. My mother used to lull me to sleep singing *guijiras*. Perhaps it's because of this link that I feel so attracted to Spain and its music." French composers of the time, including Chabrier and Debussy, had a vicarious love affair with Spain, a land exotic in Moorish associations and mythic in the immense antiquity of its traditions. Ravel himself was almost an insider; his parents had lived over the border for prolonged periods. Spain was the heart of his heart and the foster mother of his dreams; the serenely floating melody of that dead Infanta, the first of Ravel's legendary princesses, idealized a never-never land that was truer than truth.

Something of its ordered grace survived into Ravel's most experimental phase. In piano works such as *Miroirs* and *Gaspard de la Nuit* (1908), he explored his own kind of Debussyan impressionism. Yet even in these pieces the magic, whether it be white (as in *Ondine*) or black (as in *Scarbo*), is precisely objecti-

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fied; the "black" piece boggles the imagination, as well as the ears, because its virtuosity, like that of the legendary Paganini, makes it seem momentarily superhuman. Wizardry "distances" experience: which may bear on Ravel's remark that "my objective is technical perfection, though I am certain of never being able to attain it."

Certainly he labored assiduously on technique during his middle years: for instance in the *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* of 1911, a work in which his harmonic obliquities became (often bi-tonally) linear, the textures purged and pared. A central work is the great Piano Trio, composed in 1914, the first year of the Great War that may have marked the beginning of the end of "Western" civilization. (Ravel was for a time an ambulance driver at the front and "went through some moving experiences, occasionally painful, and perilous enough to amaze me that I'm still alive," as he remarked in a letter to Vaughan Williams; yet he was an apolitical creature, who thought that "this 'patriotic' act presents a danger, not merely to our common sense, but also to our liberty.") The only effect of the war on the Piano Trio was in the music's gravity and intensity; the dream-world it evokes is in no way an evasion or an escape. In the first movement both the strings and the linearly conceived piano part sing antique modal melodies distinguished by nobility as well as elegance; the dance rhythms of the scherzo (called *Pantoum* and based on an exotic, metrically complex verse form) are fantastic as well as ebullient; the slow movement is a gravely grand *passacaille* in the aeolian mode, built over a triple-rhythmed ostinato bass, while the finale transmutes dream into corybantic immediacy.

Around this time Ravel produced his largest work, perhaps his masterpiece. *Daphnis et Chloé* was a ballet for Diaghilev that exploited all possible sumptuousness of orchestral, choral, and choreographic resources to celebrate innocence reborn in the physicality of dance. Surging melodies, luxuriant harmonies, and dazzling orchestral expertise pay homage not to a "Western" purgatorial Christ, but to the pagan god Pan. Even the story turns on the adolescent innocence of the lovers—quite literally on their ignorance of "the facts of life." Here a mythic ancient Greece is metamorphosed into a French eighteenth-century, Watteauesque dreamland, and thence into theatrical illusion—the more poignant because Europe was on the brink of war—in twentieth-century Paris.

In a slighter way something comparable happens in *Ma mère l'oye* (1912), originally conceived as a set of children's pieces for piano duet but soon exquisitely orchestrated, to be balletically mimed and danced to. Mythic *contes de fées*, in the seventeenth-century retellings of Charles Perrault, prompt music of luminous modality, and of spiritual as well as corporeal grace. The simple textures herald the final phase of Ravel's work, in which the childhood theme grows mysteriously reverberant. The *Chansons madécasses* of 1925, a piece to which the composer was partial because of its purged precision, set poems by Evariste Desiré Parny, purporting to be the creation of a mythical Madegascan; their thinly scored but sensuously seductive sonorities evoke from voice, flute, cello, and (very linear) piano a "green paradise of childish loves." Similarly spare, radiantly prelapsarian music characterizes the violin and piano sonata of 1927, which has a very Parisian, childishly "savage" blues for a slow movement.

This phase of Ravel's art reached consummation in the opera that he wrote with Colette in 1920 and 1925, *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*. It is a one-act parable that refashions the Christian myth of the fall and redemption. A naughty child is absolved, in a pagan Magic Garden, by the insects, the birds, the beasts, and even the inanimate objects that he has assaulted in his malice. Not for nothing does the Fairy Princess from this child's storybook sing a modal melody that is, strictly speaking, enchanting. The end of the opera, when the child sings in gentle modal polyphony with the creatures, in gratitude for their forgiveness, is surely one of the most heart-rending moments in twentieth-century music. The song is stifled as, the dream evaporating, the child awakens with a cry of "Maman," on the threshold of the house of man.

Listening to this music, we cannot doubt that if Ravel, ensconced in his elegant Parisian apartment, surrounded by exquisite mechanical toys and still more exquisitely adjusted Oriental felines, seemed cold and aloof as a man, it must have been not because he felt too little, but because he felt too much. He feared, not without reason, that the unimaginative harshness of the adult world might stifle love. Machine-honed perfection, whether in toys, in cats, or in the techniques of his music, ironically shielded the innocence of a child, for the salvation of which, in a more than usually corrupt world, the artist lived.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Ravel does not seem to have talked of, let alone theorized about, his obsession with childhood. Several of his friends spoke of his remarkable rapport with their children; Mimie Godesbska wrote that hearing of Ravel's death was like losing her own father a second time. Nor is there any doubt that Ravel's fantasy life with children was inseparable from the fantasy world of his art. Mother-tied and a lifelong bachelor (though not, apparently, homosexual), Ravel attributed his isolation, and possibly his celibacy, to his being an artist who, as he put it in a letter to Maurice Rosenthal,

> must be very careful when he wishes to marry someone, because an artist never knows to what extent he may render his companion unhappy. He is obsessed by his creative work and by the problems which it poses. He lives a little like an awakened dreamer, and that's not amusing for a woman who lives with him. One must always consider that when one wishes to marry.

Of course this is a problem for any artist, but not many consciously evade marriage because of it. It would seem that Ravel's self-sufficiency made the evasion possible, as he, like Satie, miraculously

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became a child. Schumann, by contrast, in *Kinderscenen*, or Delius, in *Sea Drift*, were nostalgists, adults who yearned for childhood lost, or for youth frittered away.

L'Enfant et les Sortilèges ought to have been Ravel's last word. Though the remaining substantial works in his fairly exiguous output do not deny its message, some of them have more to do with a fall than with a redemption. Between 1929 and 1931, Ravel worked on two piano concertos, one of them for a left-handed pianist, the philosopher Wittgenstein's brother, who had lost his right arm in the war. Both concertos are Iberian in flavor, and thus hark back to Ravel's earliest dreamworld.

The two-handed concerto—in G major, traditionally a key of benediction—was based on long-discarded material for a "Basque fantasy." It opens with an allegro that alternates between exuberant Spanish fiesta, the piano martially glittering through effervescent trumpets, and languorous nostalgia, wherein the lilt of tango and habanera is spiced with Latin American jazz. The slow movement, in traditionally paradisal E major, is the *ne plus ultra* of Ravel's Fairy Princess tunes, its heavenly perfection tinged, in wistful regret at its evanescence, with false relations or Negroid blue notes (simultaneous or near-simultaneous soundings of the major and minor third). Here Rococo ornament is disembodied, as Ravel makes the kind of music that his beloved Mozart might have created, had he really been childlike. The concerto's finale swings the dream into the modern world as its Spanish rhythms grow more overtly jazzy, with tunes and harmonies redolent of Gershwin's *An American in Paris*. (Gershwin, who was, according to Ravel, "a musician endowed with the most brilliant, the most enchanting, and perhaps the most profound talent," wanted to take composition lessons with Ravel, but Ravel maintained that Gershwin had all the technique he needed, and that technique extraneous to need could only "ruin his talent.")

Ravel's left-handed concerto summons a darker magic, embracing within a single movement a processional dance of majestic Iberian flamboyance, alongside gypsyish motor rhythms. Orchestral textures are richly tenebrous; the virtuosity of the solo part is of breathtaking legerdemain. Can it have been the physically sinister nature of the piece that provoked Ravel to delve into such metaphysically black magic, which emerges from the near total darkness of double basses and double bassoon? This sepulchral opening parallels that to *La Valse*, which was written ten years earlier.

Still, the piece, however necromantic, remains a life-enhancing work. *La Valse*, by contrast, drives itself crazy. Although Ravel characteristically objected to fanciful interpretations of the piece as a "tragic allusion" to the end of the Second Empire or to the situation in Vienna after the war, and insisted that this music was simply "an ascending progression of sonority," it would seem that his defense mechanism was again active. One needs no grandiose concept like the Death of Europe, or Ravel's own impending demise (faint harbingers of his long terminal illness were already manifest), to find this "choreographic poem" not only superficially scary, but also deeply disturbing. Ravel, interestingly, meant it to be danced to, once more releasing psychological turmoil in physical action.

A subtle irony relates this "orchestral crescendo" to a technically comparable orchestral work written at the end of Ravel's life. The notorious *Bolero* of 1928, which to the composer's chagrin became his most frequently performed piece, was the fortuitous consequence of an aborted commission of a ballet for Ida Rubinstein. Its musical material and its structure are, and were meant to be, infantile—not in the Edenic sense typical of Ravel's most heartfelt music, but in being deliberately minimal. The composer described it as "orchestral tissue without music," and claimed to have put it together like one of his mechanical toys or clocks. It consists of a single tune in the Ionian mode (in this case more or less identical with C major), repeated eighteen times totally without variation but with progressively and incrementally more opulent orchestration, like a slowly approaching procession.

That the piece so tickled the popular imagination must have been due to its gimmicky nature; but that it has held the popular imagination for more than sixty years calls for a deeper explanation. It would seem that the obsessively repeated tune in binary form is not merely insistent, but also strong enough to sustain its repetitions—in which respect it differs from the reiterated figurations in today's explicitly "minimal" music. If you listen to Ravel's tune intently, moreover, you discover that it has intuitive affinities with the wondrous Fairy Princess melody in the slow movement of the G major Piano Concerto. Despite Ravel's dismissal of his *Bolero*, a piece for orchestra with such a tune could hardly be "without music." Interestingly enough, at its ultimate dynamic climax the music momentarily but cataclysmically modulates, or shifts gear, from C major to celestial E major—the key of the concerto's Fairy Princess herself. Thus hypnosis becomes ecstasis, carrying us "out of" our statically earthy condition.

At his most infantile and "popular," as in *Bolero*, or at his most childishly profound, as in *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*, Ravel is a magical artist who plumbs the depths of being almost naively. This may explain why he got on so well with the burly and conspicuously undandyish Vaughan Williams, when the British composer surprisingly but rewardingly took lessons with him. In a sense, Ravel's aboriginal quality defines his limitations. Unlike Williams, he never grew up to become, never wanted to become, a symphonist. Even in his biggest and technically sophisticated work, *Daphnis et Chloé*, he is concerned with pre-adult experience. Nowhere, except possibly in the marvelous Piano Trio, does he attempt to grapple with contemporary "realities," as "major" composers of the twentieth century are presumed to.

It is for his magic that those who have come under Ravel's spell love him, and it is fascinating to learn again, from these documentary accounts, how many there were, how many there are. I hadn't realized how triumphal was Ravel's tour of America, the still hopeful New World, in the late 1920s. "Standing ovations" from audiences of three to four thousand would seem to suggest that in this vast industrial technocracy there were hearts that yearned for the magic of a man who was certainly not Christian, but who made music with religious implications deeper than he or we knew. In the end, Ravel's enchanted world was not an escape from the modern world. It was one of its essential projects.

WILFRID MELLERS, professor emeritus of music at the University of York, is the author of, among other works, *Beethoven and the Voice of God* (Oxford University Press).

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Japanese market, European market, or U.S. market. It's just one big world oil market, and international borders are largely irrelevant.

In the one area in which borders do mean something, the Japanese are clearly at an advantage. Crude oil and its products are priced in dollars. The Japanese convert their yen-based earnings into dollars at an extremely favorable rate—a rate that has improved since August 2—and thus they were protected from much of the post-invasion increase in oil prices. That increase in prices has been wiped out as of this writing.

Finally, the Japanese have an extremely adaptable posture toward the price of oil. Compare that with the United States, where the Mark Greens, Howard Metzenbaums, and Joseph Liebermans of this world waste their time firing up the American people over a twenty-five-cent increase in the price of gasoline that occurred after a ten-year decline in both real terms and, in some parts of the 1980s, actual terms as well. Leaders such as these merely help support the strongly held belief among the United States driving public that cheap gasoline is a constitutional right. Given that dogma, the U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf are far greater than those of Japan, regardless of the 70 to 12 percent ratio cited by Mr. Judis.

JOHN KINGSTON
New York, New York

The writer is managing editor of *Platt's Oilgram Price Report.*

Rich Heritage

To the editors:

In the March 11 Notebook you take a poke at the Heritage Foundation for agreeing with the ruling of the Department of Education's Michael Williams against race-exclusive scholarships while announcing its own scholarship for a minority student journalist.

True, but what's the point? The Heritage Foundation is a private organization that accepts no government funds, grants, or aid, unlike the colleges and universities subject to the Williams ruling. Lawrence Wade, for whom our scholarship is named, is a journalist, a conservative, a black, and a friend, and all of us at Heritage are proud to support with voluntarily contributed dollars a scholarship in his name for minority student journalists.

HUGH C. NEWTON
Washington, D.C.

The writer is public relations counsel with the Heritage Foundation.

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Arab-Moslem Fanaticism and Intransigence

Are *they* the root cause of Mid-East turmoil?

For the last five decades, the world has been convinced, mostly because of unrelenting Arab propaganda, that the conflict between Israel and the "Palestinians" is the root cause of the constant turmoil in the Middle East and that Israel should make "concessions" to the Arabs. But is that the *real* reason for the turmoil and for the violence? Or is there another, much deeper, more fundamental reason behind it?

What are the facts?

■ We Americans are reluctant to criticize or even to discuss the religions of others. We consider it a very personal matter. But the profound hatred of the Moslem Arab world against the West, especially against the United States (the "Great Satan") and Israel (the "Little Satan") can only be explained by trying to comprehend the psychology and the principal religious tenets of Islam. Islam is a world-wide religion, but it originated in Arabia and it survives in Arabia in its purest and most virulent form. The policies of the Arab countries are totally dominated by Islam. Islam believes itself to be in possession of the holy truth. In the name of that truth, any act of violence is permitted, sanctioned and encouraged. It is perhaps only with that understanding that the "strategic decisions" of Saddam Hussein, even with his armed forces at the edge of destruction, can be explained.

■ For the first six centuries after the Moslems spilled forth from the Arabian peninsula, they conquered much of the then known world, with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other. The Arab Moslems did in their ascendancy indeed give rise to a substantial civilization. But then, beginning with the expulsion from Spain, a long decline set in that lasted until the beginning of the 20th century. That decline was the more bitter, the more frustrating, because is was inflicted by the hated and despised "infidels". It was something that had to be remedied by whatever means. Injured pride had to be salved; the enemies who caused this humiliation and this painful injury had to be destroyed.

■ The 20th century brought national independence to the Arab states. Two other fundamental events occurred: 1) The discovery of the world's largest oil deposits under the Arabian peninsula, and 2) The creation, in 1948, of the state of Israel, which ever since its birth has been the concentrated focus of hatred and venom of all Moslem Arabs, a hatred that unites them, even surpasses their hatreds against each other, and that has launched them into five disastrous wars against Israel. Even the rape of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's Iraq was explained as being a step towards the "liberation of Palestine", a claim so bizarre, so patently absurd that it can only be comprehended and given credence by a mind obsessed with the ideology of Arab Islam.

■ The obsession of the Moslem Arabs with Israel is totally irrational. To have Israel, an advanced highly civilized Western outpost, as an independent country in the middle of the Arab-Moslem world is utterly intolerable to them. That is the reason that the 21 Arab states, among them the richest countries in the world, with a combined population of more than 200 million and with a land area greater than that of the U. S., have since the beginning of the century concentrated obsessive ferocity by military, economic, ideological, political, diplomatic, and any other means to destroy the tiny Jewish community of Palestine, and its successor, the Jewish state of Israel -- only 4 million people in a country just one-half the size of San Bernardino County in California.

The recent events in Iraq have sobered many who had believed the Israel-Palestinian conflict to be the cause for the unrest in the Middle East. The fact is that war is endemic in the Arab world and that the Moslem Arabs have been waging war against each other and against their non-Arab neighbors for centuries. But, as much as the Moslem Arabs hate each other, they are all united in their greater hatred against the "infidel Jews" and their tiny country, and they have built vast war machines for the ultimate "jihad" to chase the Jews into the sea. The insincere focus on the Palestinian plight is designed to divert attention from the many domestic problems and inter-Arab conflicts, and to direct the Moslem Arab frustration against Israel, the "infidel Western outsider". The suggestion that Israel divest itself from its historic heartland, the 2,362 sq. mi. "West Bank", would be a step toward its strategic suicide. The real cause of the never-ending turmoil in the Middle East is the unremitting desire of the Arab Moslem states to destroy Israel, their inability to come to terms with its very existence. That hatred and that intolerance are fueled by Arab-Moslem fanaticism and intransigence and unwillingness to accept diversity in the region. Only when that can be overcome can peace and tranquility finally come to the Middle East.

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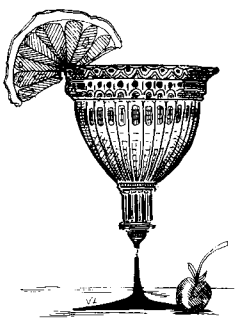
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Matters of conscience

CONGRESSIONAL DEMOCRATS WHO voted against the "use of force" resolution in January are now desperate to find a convincing excuse. So far they're not doing very well. The argument that we'll never know whether sanctions would have worked is totally unconvincing, I suspect even to those making it. So is the case that President Bush should have waited another six months before attacking Iraq. Had he waited, most of the same legislators surely would have insisted that he wait six more. But the silliest defense of all is that it is somehow unfair for Republicans to politicize a "matter of conscience." Questions of conscience are, and ought to be, of greater primacy than matters in which conscience plays little part, like, say, the still-live issue of whether to spend $500,000 to turn Lawrence Welk's birthplace into a national landmark. The Gulf war resolution is certainly fair bait. But the Republicans doing the baiting are ignoring another matter of conscience: their own record as appeasers of Iraq before August 2. The biggest hypocrites are Newt Gingrich, the House minority whip, who says Democrats must admit they were wrong, and Phil Gramm, the chairman of the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee, who recently sent out a fund-raising letter attacking "appeasement-before-country liberals." Gingrich and Gramm led the effort against a sanctions bill, written by Democrat Howard Berman of California, that would have checked Saddam *before* he invaded Kuwait. Gramm actually offered an amendment to gut the embargo in the interests of Texas farmers. Six days before Iraq invaded, he said a law denying agricultural credits to Iraq would only make its proponents "feel better." Another villain is Clayton Yeutter, who as secretary of agriculture opposed cutting off Iraq's credit, and now as Republican national chairman spins dire scenarios about what would have happened had a Democrat been in the White House. And let's not forget Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole, who published a recent opinion piece in *The Wall Street Journal* excoriating the Democrats, "who are now doing all they can to duck accountability for their votes against Operation Desert Storm." I don't see Senator Dole stepping forward to take the rap for his visit to Baghdad last April, when he promised Saddam that he and his colleagues would exert their "utmost efforts" to oppose sanctions meant to punish him for biological and chemical weapons proliferation. Charity may be too much to ask from this cast of characters, but humility is definitely called for.

C-SPAN VIEWERS MUST BE TOO numb from the Keating Five hearings to be shocked by yet another corrupt senator, but the case of Mark Hatfield, Republican of Oregon, is extraordinary even by prevailing standards of public integrity. In 1986 Hatfield took tens of thousands of dollars in gifts from the University of South Carolina, which was petitioning the Appropriations Committee he chaired at the time for a $16 million grant. The university got its new engineering building; Hatfield got Steuben crystal worth $4,410, an Audubon print valued at $3,337, and a $1,518 Boehm china sculpture. Best of all, he got a four-year full scholarship for his son, paid for out of the same discretionary fund used to buy the other presents. Hatfield listed none of these trinkets on disclosure forms, though Senate rules require that he do so.



THIS WASN'T HATFIELD'S FIRST ethical lapse. In 1984 his wife received a $55,000 fee for helping find a condo for a shady Greek financier, Basil Tsakos. Tsakos was trying to interest Hatfield in a trans-African oil pipeline at the time. Despite testimony from no fewer than four of Tsakos's former employees that the gratuity was intended to influence the Oregonian, Hatfield was exonerated by the Senate Ethics Committee (surprise). When the scandal came to light, he professed incorruptibility and donated the money to a children's hospital. Hatfield is hoping the same trick will work this time. After first claiming he didn't know any of the items were worth more than a hundred dollars, he promised to bequeath them to Willamette University, where his papers are destined to end up, and got very angry at the suggestion of improbity. "To suggest that I would be influenced by these gifts is contrary to my convictions and contrary to my integrity," he said. I am honest, ergo, I am not affected by large sums of money given me by people who want favors in return. Hatfield seems to be treated with ethical Teflon. Bribes rinse right off his no-stick moral coating. At least he hasn't pleaded "constituent service."

HATFIELD AND HIS DEMOCRATIC colleagues who voted against the war may want to sign up for an upcoming seminar at Harvard Law School: "Dealing with an Angry Public: Protecting Your Reputation and Your Market Share." For a fee of $1,175, less than the cost of a Boehm china sculpture, participants in the June briefing will learn how to placate "concerned interest groups" and "angry constituents." The idea of the seminar, which is being led by conflict-resolution consultant Lawrence Susskind, director of the Harvard-MIT Public Disputes Program, is that it's a mistake for politicians to "retreat behind a shield of public relations, advertising, and image management." Instead, Susskind thinks they should negotiate and perhaps try some good old academic obfuscation. Participants in the first day's session will apply the lessons "in the context of a multiparty, interactive, crisis management role-play: Dealing with the Consequences of an Unintentional Mistake." Day two focuses on intentional mistakes and votes of conscience.

REMEMBER FRANK PERDUE'S SLOgan "It takes a tough man to make a tender chicken"? The concept of thug marketing seems to be making a comeback. A felony conviction is no bar to doing commercial endorsements if you're a can-do conservative. This month's issue of *International Counterterrorism & Security* features a full-page glossy picture of Oliver North, touting Guardian bullet-proof vests. They're manufactured by a company called Guardian Technologies International, of which North is listed as chairman. And among mainstream publications, an ad for Concha y Toro Chilean wine in the latest issue of *Food & Wine* features a disquisition by G. Gordon Liddy "On Graft." Grafting, you see, is bad for grapes. Liddy says he enjoys all the wines of Chile: the Cabernet Sauvignon, the Chardonnay, the Pinot Chet. They taste best out of Steuben crystal goblets. Mark Hatfield says so.

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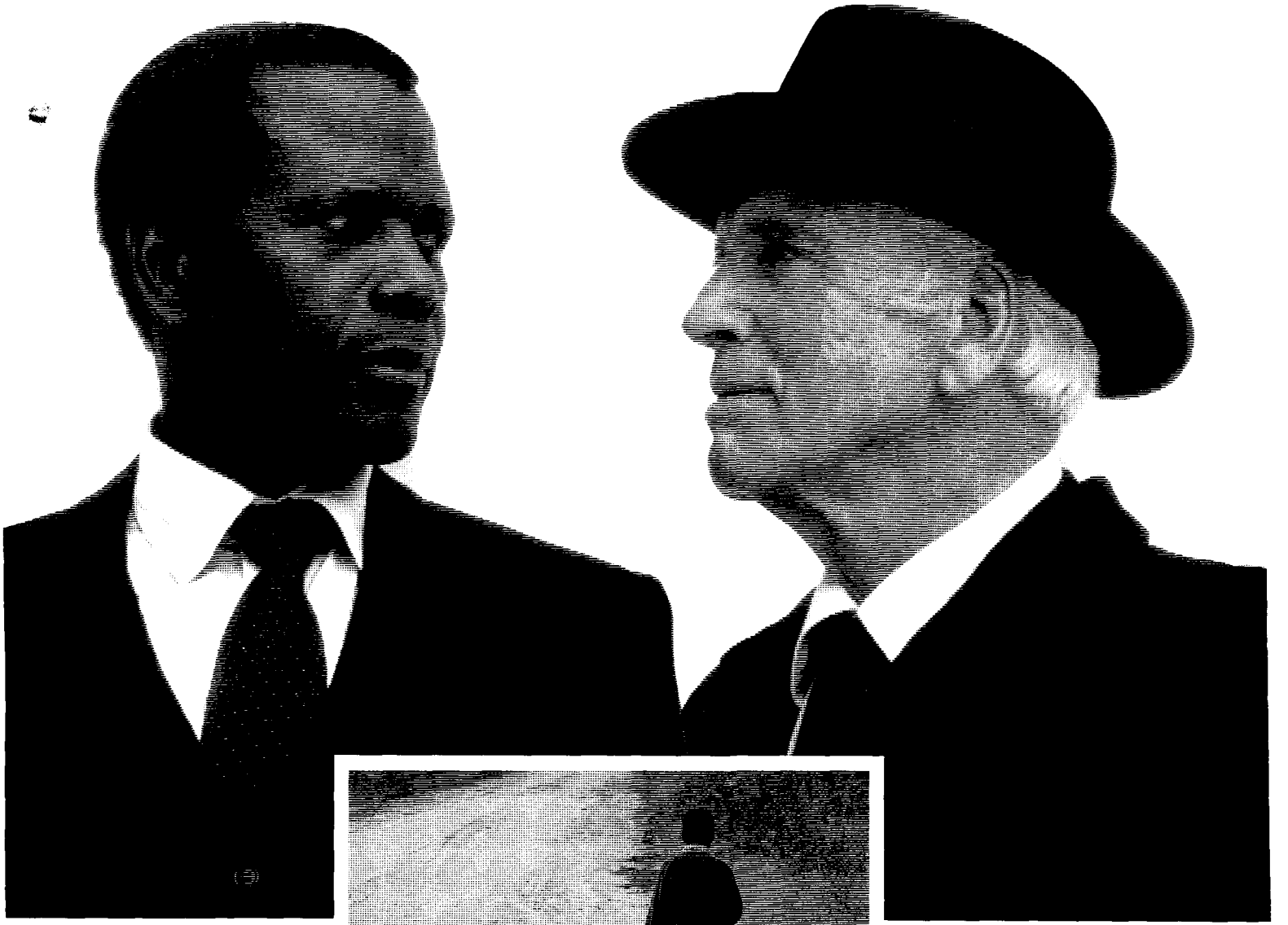

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